



DRAGON NEWS

A newsletter from Principal Collins and the DES PTA

May 2017

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Prekindergarten/Head Start Registration Began March 10

Parents who want to register their child for an MCPS prekindergarten or Head Start class for the 2017–2018 school year can do so now. Children must be four years old on or before September 1, 2017, and families must be income-eligible to apply.

For more information about eligibility guidelines, location and times of community registrations, or required documents to complete an application, call 301-230-0676 or visit the MCPS website at:

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/dtecps/earlychildhood/prek/

End-Of-Year Testing

We have a lot of testing coming up in the next few weeks. Please have your child to school on time on the dates below to help your child complete the testing efficiently and avoid missing more class time.

3rd Grade	MAP-R = May 12 PARCC ELA = May 15, 17, 18 PARCC Math = May 19, 22, 24, 25 MAP-M = May 23
4th Grade	MAP-R = May 9 PARCC ELA = May 15, 17, 18 PARCC MATH = May 19, 22, 24, 25 MAP-M = June 5
5th Grade	PARCC ELA = May 3, 4, 5 PARCC MATH = May 8, 10, 11, 12 MAP-R = May 15 MAP-M = May 17

DAMASCUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ADDRESS:
10201 Bethesda Church Road
Damascus, MD 20872

PHONE:
301-253-7080

FAX:
301-253-8717

SCHOOL WEBSITE:
montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/damascuses/

PRINCIPAL:
Bill Collins

EMAIL:
William_J_Collins@mcpsmd.org

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

PTA WEBSITE:
www.damascuspta.com

PTA EMAIL:
desptamail@gmail.com



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MCPS Annual Report to the Community

The 2016 MCPS Annual Report to the Community is now available online. This review of the highlights and accomplishments of the past school year includes information about student achievement, the operational and capital budgets, and highlights of events from the 2015–2016 school year. Review the report at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/annualreport/2016/.

Summer Programs Extended Due to Later Start Date of School Year

Montgomery County summer camp programs will be extended to support families without childcare options due to the later start time of the school year. This follows the executive order that Governor Larry Hogan signed last fall, which required Maryland's public schools to start classes after Labor Day, beginning with the 2017–2018 school year. Montgomery County Recreation added more than 40 additional full or half-day programs to effectively serve families due to the later start date for the school year. This included six Summer Fun Centers (SFC), which are the Department of Recreation's most affordable summer day programs. Registration is available at www.activemontgomery.org and is also available by mail, fax to 240-777-6818, or in person at most recreation and parks facilities including community recreation centers, ice rinks, tennis centers, aquatic facilities and at the Montgomery County Recreation Administrative Offices at 4010 Randolph Road in Silver Spring. For more information about summer programs call 240-777-6840.

Board of Education Adopts Updated Calendar for 2017–18 School Year

The Board of Education adopted an updated calendar for the 2017–2018 school year at its February 27 meeting. The first day of school for students will be September 5, 2017, and the last day of school for students will now be June 12, 2018. For more information, visit

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org and click on calendar.

The Board of Education originally adopted a calendar for the 2017–2018 school year at its December 13 meeting. However, immediately after the Board's action, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and other counties received communication from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) that clarified the state's position that school districts would need to conclude all possible instructional make-up days due to emergency and weather-related closings by the June 15 timeframe set by Governor Larry Hogan's executive order. The calendar the Board adopted in December had make-up days after June 15 and therefore was not compliant with the new direction from the state.

The updated calendar is based on 182 instructional days, which is two more than the minimum required by the state but two less than previous years. The calendar adopted by the Board for the 2017–2018 school year is now consistent with Governor Larry Hogan's executive order that established a timeframe for the school year to begin no earlier than the Tuesday after Labor Day and to end no later than June 15.

Don't Miss the Gaithersburg Book Festival

Montgomery County Public Schools is proud to be a partner in the 2017 Gaithersburg Book Festival on Saturday, May 20, on the grounds of Gaithersburg City Hall. The book festival has a great lineup of authors and activities for children of all ages. Several members of the MCPS community will be conducting readings at the festival and there will be many programs, workshops, and activities in the Children's Village that are designed to promote interest in reading and writing. For more information, visit gaithersburgbookfestival.org/.

*~ Bill Collins
Principal*

Informe Anual de MCPS a la Comunidad

¡Ya está disponible en línea el Informe Anual 2016 de MCPS a la Comunidad! Este repaso de aspectos destacados y logros del último ciclo escolar incluye información sobre el rendimiento estudiantil, el presupuesto operativo y el presupuesto de capital, y momentos memorables del ciclo escolar 2015–2016. Asegúrese de leer el contenido del informe en www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/annualreport/2016/.

Consejo de Educación Adopta Calendario Actualizado para el Ciclo Escolar 2017–2018

El Consejo de Educación adoptó un calendario actualizado para el ciclo escolar 2017–2018 durante su reunión del 27 de febrero. El primer día de clases para los estudiantes será el 5 de septiembre, 2017, y el último día de clases ahora será el 12 de junio, 2018.

[Vea el calendario: http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/calendar/2017-18_SchoolYearCalendar-20170227.pdf]

Originalmente, el Consejo de Educación había adoptado un calendario para el ciclo escolar 2017–2018 durante su reunión del 13 de diciembre, 2016. Sin embargo, inmediatamente después de la acción del Consejo, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) recibió un comunicado del Departamento de Educación del Estado de Maryland (Maryland State Department of Education–MSDE) que esclarecía la posición del estado de que los distritos escolares necesitarían concluir todos los posibles días de recuperación de instrucción debido a emergencias y cierres relacionados con el clima a más tardar el 15 de junio, según el esquema cronológico establecido por la orden ejecutiva del Gobernador Larry Hogan. El calendario adoptado por el Consejo en diciembre incluía días de recuperación después del 15 de junio, y por lo tanto, no estaba en cumplimiento con la nueva directiva del estado.

El calendario actualizado está basado en 182 días lectivos, que equivale a dos días más que el mínimo que exige el estado, pero dos días menos que en años anteriores. El calendario adoptado por el Consejo para

el ciclo escolar 2017–2018 ahora concuerda con la orden ejecutiva del Gobernador Larry Hogan, que estableció un esquema cronológico para que el ciclo escolar comience no antes del martes después del Día del Trabajo (Labor Day) y que termine a más tardar el 15 de junio.

El Consejo también adoptó un plan contingente que identifica fechas que podrían utilizarse como días de instrucción si fuese necesario recuperar días de clase perdidos debido a emergencias o cierres de escuelas relacionados con el clima. Dos de estos días son los primeros dos días programados para las vacaciones de primavera, los días 26 y 27 de marzo, 2018. Un día, el 26 de enero, 2018, reemplazaría a uno de los días de capacitación profesional. Fechas adicionales de contingencia extenderían el ciclo escolar hasta el 15 de junio, 2018.

No Se Pierda el Festival del Libro en Gaithersburg

Montgomery County Public Schools se enorgullece en ser colaborador en el Festival del Libro 2017 en Gaithersburg, el sábado, 20 de mayo, en los terrenos de Gaithersburg City Hall. El festival del libro tiene un repertorio maravilloso, con autores y actividades para niños de todas las edades. Varios miembros de la comunidad estarán ofreciendo lecturas durante el festival y habrán muchos programas, talleres, y actividades en la Villa de los Niños (Children's Village), diseñados a promover el interés por la lectura y la redacción. Para más información, visite gaithersburgbookfestival.org/.



Departamento de Recreación del Condado de Montgomery y las Escuelas Públicas Ex-tienden Programas de Verano Debido a Que el Inicio del Ciclo Escolar Es Más Tarde

Los programas de campamentos de verano del Condado de Montgomery se extenderán, a fin de apoyar a las familias que no tienen opciones de cuidado infantil debido a que el inicio del ciclo escolar es más tarde. Esto sigue a la orden ejecutiva que el Gobernador Larry Hogan firmó el pasado otoño, exigiendo que las escuelas públicas de Maryland comiencen las clases después del Día del Trabajo (Labor Day), a partir del ciclo escolar 2017–2018. El Departamento de Recreación del Condado de Montgomery añadió más de 40 programas adicionales de día completo o de medio día, a fin de servir a las familias de una

manera eficaz debido a que el inicio del ciclo escolar es más tarde. Esto incluye seis Centros de Diversión de Verano (Summer Fun Centers—SFC), que son los programas diurnos de verano más económicos que ofrece el Departamento de Recreación. La inscripción está disponible en línea, en www.activemontgomery.org; también está disponible por correo; por fax, al número 240-777-6818; o, en persona en la mayoría de las instalaciones de recreación y parques incluyendo centros recreativos en la comunidad, pistas de hielo, centros de tenis, instalaciones de natación, y en las Oficinas Administrativas del Departamento de Recreación del Condado de Montgomery, 4010 Randolph Road, en Silver Spring. Para más información sobre los programas de verano, llame al 240-777-6840.

Thanks for the Memories

If you did not order your DES Yearbook yet, it's not too late. You can send a check payable to "DES PTA" for \$20. Please send it to school in an envelope marked DES Yearbook with your child's name and teacher. Supplies are limited!

Muffins With Moms

What mom can resist a muffin and coffee with her little one. Our annual "Muffins With Moms" will be held on **Friday, May 12, from 8:45 to 9:30 a.m.** in the DES All Purpose Room.

Donuts With Dads

On **Friday, June 9, from 8:45 to 9:30 a.m.** we will be celebrating dads in our DES All Purpose Room. Spend the morning visiting with your DES student while you enjoy breakfast on us.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope everyone had an enjoyable spring break. The remaining days of school always seem to fly by and I am sure this year will be no different. Although we are in the home stretch, your PTA is not slowing down! We still have many fun events and programs planned for our students and families.

Our very popular "Dashing Dragons" running program has just begun. As a lifetime runner myself, I LOVE this program! Running is a sport and form of exercise that can be done almost anywhere; all you need is a pair of running shoes. I am always impressed by how much our runners improve during the seven week program. No matter what sport a person enjoys, being a strong runner will always give him or her an edge. It is not too late for your child to sign up. See the attached flier for more details.

"Muffins with Moms" and "Donuts with Dads" are coming up in May and June. These breakfasts are

a favorite of mine. Students are always excited to share this special time with their parents.

In June we will say a final farewell to the DES fifth grade class as they move on to Baker Middle School in the fall. Thank you to everyone who supported the fifth grade fundraising efforts this year. As a result, they are going to have a celebration to remember!

As the school year comes to an end we will be looking to fill open PTA committee chair positions for next school year. If you are interested in taking a more active role in the PTA, there are always opportunities that will allow you to share your talents. Feel free to contact me anytime at northnlandscaping@msn.com to learn more about these opportunities.

*~Melissa North
DES PTA President*

*"The meaning of life is to find your gift.
The purpose of life is to give it away."
~ William Shakespeare*

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

- May 2: Words Their Way Training for Parents, Grades K-2, 6 p.m.
PTA Business Meeting, 7 p.m.
Words Their Way Training for Parents, Grades 3-5, 7:30 p.m.
- May 5: Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- May 11: Group Piano Make-up Class
- May 12: Muffins with Moms, 8:45-9:30 a.m.
Group Piano Recital, 7 p.m.
- May 19: Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- May 23: Spring Chorus Concert, 7 p.m.
- May 29: NO SCHOOL—Memorial Day
- May 30: Spring Instrumental Concert, 7 p.m.
- June 9: Donuts with Dads, 8:45-9:30 a.m.
Parents Helping Teachers Workgroup, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- June 15: Fifth Grade End-of-Year Celebration
- June 16: LAST DAY OF SCHOOL—Early Release



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

We're in the home stretch! I am now collecting April hours. We appreciate all of your time and effort! Remember that 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 (Christine at 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 March and April.

Thank you to Kelly, Melody, and Sheila for organizing our Top O' Morning Staff Breakfast. Thank you also to all of the parents who contributed breakfast goodies to make the day luckier.

Thank you to Tara and Melissa and the team who helped with the Dragon Round-Up. A special thanks to our SSL students who helped with the games. Thank you to Justin, Tyler, Kaitlyn, Mark, Hope, Gage, Jerry, and Tori.

Thank you also to Dawn for all of our awesome dance instruction, and Alexis for her help as our DJ.

Thank you Beth and Brittany and their team who helped run our silent auction. Thank you also to all of the families who contributed to the class baskets and independent goods and services.

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 all of the fifth grade parents who contributed to the concessions. It is a huge help as we prepare for our end of year fun!

Thank you to Jamie and Tara for all of your work on the Reading Incentive Program. It is an awesome way to celebrate our readers!

Thank you to Theresa and Christine for your help with vision and hearing screening.

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

*~ 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 Theresa Tenzier, Christine Derby, and Gerry Choulas for helping out on Friday, March 3.

Thanks to Roberta Sherwood, Theresa Tenzier, Christine Derby, and Gerry Choulas for helping out on Friday, March 17.

Thanks to Carla VonAgner, Theresa Tenzier, Christine Derby, and Gerry Choulas for helping out on Friday, March 31. And thanks to Carla VonAgner, Theresa Tenzier, Christine Derby, and Gerry Choulas for helping out on Friday, April 21. We were able to complete many work requests for the teachers and staff.

Our next workgroups will be meet on the following Fridays from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.:

**May 5 and 19
June 9***

**Note that June 9 will be the final workgroup for this school year.*

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*

Staff Appreciation Week—May 1-5

Our staff appreciation schedule for the week is:

- Monday: staff breakfast
- Tuesday: gift card raffle
- Wednesday: catered lunch from Maggi's
- Thursday: popcorn bar and Redbox vouchers
- Friday: lucky lotto day

Thanks to the wonderful offer of two alumni fathers, Scott Brown and Leon Grant, the staff of DES were also treated to an omelet bar on Friday, April 28.

Thank you to the DES families who helped with staff appreciation week—we couldn't do it without you!

*~ Kelly Jonas, Chair
Staff Appreciation Committee*



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/

GROUP PIANO UPDATE

Mrs. Laing and the group piano students are winding down the 2016-2017 program. It's hard to believe that there are only three more lessons remaining and one make up class that is scheduled for Thursday, May 11.

Everyone is invited to the recital that will be held on **Friday, May 12 at 7 p.m.** in the DES All Purpose Room. We have some wonderful students who will perform their favorite piano pieces. There will also be light refreshments served.

Mrs. Laing would like to thank the DES PTA, staff and parents for their support with the group piano program.

Mrs. Laing would also like to thank the following group piano students for their dedication to the program: Fara Giganti, Emily Ridgeway, Michelle-Allen Ibeno, Emma and Noah Jacobson, Allison Hernandez, Jocelyn Fryer, Rosie Kuszewski, Jessica and Stephanie Lewis, Lily Luther, Kylie Sherwood, Feben Fekadu, Evan McFarland and Devon Seek.

Mrs. Laing is looking forward teaching more students in 2017-2018. More information about next year's program will be sent to all DES students in grades 1-5 by the end of May.

*~ Roberta Sherwood
Group Piano Chair*

