



DIAMOND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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EXCELLENCE THROUGH EFFORT!

Office of the Principal

August 1, 2019

Dear Diamond Parents and Guardians,

On behalf of the entire staff at Diamond Elementary School, I am excited to welcome all of you to the 2019-2020 school year. We would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our new Diamond students and their families to the school community. We hope you are enjoying a fun-filled, relaxing summer with your family and friends, and we hope you are excited to begin the new school year. ***The first day of school is Tuesday, September 3rd!***

The summer time provided opportunities for extensive cleaning throughout the building for each and every classroom as we anticipate 790 students enrolled for the first day of school. All of the back to school information is posted on our website at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/diamondes/>. Please be sure to read all of the information included in the attachments as some information may require your response. Pay close attention to the transportation schedule, as this will help you identify the bus routes and drop off and pick up locations. You will also see school supply lists for each grade level. Included in the attachments is a letter from me to your child. I am asking the Diamond students to write a letter to me with a description and illustration/picture of their favorite summer experiences. I will collect the letters from the students when they return to school and then I will display them on a bulletin board in the main hallway. Please feel free to make copies of the letter template if you have multiple children attending Diamond ES.

We appreciate the funding and support the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has received from the County Council for staffing which have resulted in increase in classroom teachers and special education teacher positions.

We always appreciate the wonderful support of our school community and of course and the Diamond Elementary PTA. I would like to introduce new members of our wonderful Diamond ES PTA executive board. Alyson Kozma is our new PTA president, Chuck Clapper is our VP of school community, Stacey Severe, VP of Fundraising, Jennifer Gribskov, Treasurer, and Oksana Ogba, Secretary. Our PTA is a wonderful resource for our school program due to the wonderful support of our incredible school family community.

Our start and end times of the school day remain the same as last year. Doors open at 9:10 am. Late bell rings at 9:25 am where students arriving to school after this time will be considered tardy. Dismissal will begin at 3:50 pm. For early release days, dismissal will begin at 1:20 pm.

In the June Diamond Mine Newsletter we said farewell to staff members who were moving onto new endeavors. In July we were informed that a few other staff members were moving on to new endeavors. Ms. Miriam Bendarghate, reading initiative teacher, has retired after 16 years at Diamond ES. Mrs. Cindy Watkins, kindergarten teacher, also has decided to retire after 16 years at Diamond ES. With such changes, brings new opportunities. We are delighted to welcome talented educators to the Diamond community.

Please join me in welcoming the following new staffing additions to the Diamond community:

- *Ms. Anne Lee, 2nd grade teacher*
- *Ms. Pauline Manley, 2nd grade teacher*
- *Mr. Sean O'Connor, 3rd grade teacher*
- *Ms. Kate Steinwandel, special education teacher*
- *Ms. Camberlyn Jackson, paraeducator*
- *Mrs. Jennifer Hsu-Lee, part-time special education teacher & ESOL teacher*
- *Ms. Allison Nelson, part-time Reading Initiative Teacher (returning to Diamond ES)*
- *Mr. Duvan Blanco, part-time building service worker*
- *Ms. Stefanie Kahanov, part-time speech/language pathologist*

We have several internal staffing changes and we are pleased to announce new assignments for the upcoming school year. Mrs. Sarah Gavalla, previously a 5th grade teacher, will be joining the 2nd grade team. Ms. Kelly Serlo, previously a 2nd grade teacher, will be joining the 4th grade team. Ms. Kate Hollingshead, previously a 1st grade teacher, will be joining the kindergarten team this upcoming school year. Mrs. JoAnn Davis, an itinerant special education paraeducator in our Asperger program, will be a permanent special education paraeducator in our Asperger program. In addition, Ms. Asha Joseph, a paraeducator at our school, will be also becoming a special education paraeducator in our home school model program.

Please join me in congratulating the following staff members on their celebrations that occurred over the 2019 summer:

- Ms. Parrales, one of our great kindergarten teachers, and her husband on their July 2019 wedding. Ms. Parrales will now be recognized as Mrs. Ashley Risher

Your child will receive a postcard from their new classroom teacher between August 26th- 28th. If you are out of town and/or do not receive a postcard, please call the main office on Wednesday, August 28th after 12:30 p.m. and we will notify you of your child's teacher assignment. **On Thursday, August 29th, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., students and their family members are invited to the school for our "Sneak Peek Open House." For 4th/5th grade students who were identified as Safety Patrol Students, there will be a Safety Patrol Meeting from 1:30-2:00 p.m. in the gym on Thursday, August 29th.** Our "Sneak Peek Open House" gives students and parents an opportunity to meet their new teacher and find their classroom. Building maps will be available to help you find your child's classroom. We hope you will be able to join us as we look forward to seeing all of our Diamond families. It will be great to see the children and hear their voices echoing throughout the building after a quiet summer in the office area.

Last month, we shared information that MCPS is building a new addition in the front of our school building that will include a new main office suite with a security vestibule. This construction project started in late June and will continue through most of the 2019-2020 school year. The new main office suite and security vestibule is anticipated to be finished by January 2020. The main entrance to the school building that we are all accustomed to is included in the construction project fenced off area. Therefore, the construction company is creating a temporary school main entrance area by converting our current music room into a main office reception area, main entrance hallway, and main entrance to the school building. We will be sending further information to the school community with a visual of what this will look like for the opening of the school year.

Parents of incoming kindergarteners are invited to attend the **Kindergarten Back-To-School Night** presentation **on Thursday, August 29th from 7:00 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. in the all-purpose room.** At this parents-only meeting, kindergarten teachers will be discussing arrival/dismissal procedures, first week of school procedures, student supplies, the kindergarten curriculum, and much more! **Back-To-School Night for grades 1-2 Thursday, September 26th at 6:30 p.m. and for grades 3-5 it is scheduled for Wednesday, September 18th at 6:30 p.m.** We will send out additional information of child care options.

Once again, we look forward to seeing you at the “**Sneak Peek**” on **August 29th**, and on the **first day of school, Tuesday, September 3rd**! I am looking forward to an exciting school year with the wonderful students, parents, and teachers of Diamond ES! Please be sure to read all of the information included in the summer information packet. We encourage you to visit our website <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/diamondes/>, regularly for all school related information. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school office at (240) 740-2120. Enjoy the remaining days of your summer!

Sincerely,

Daniel Walder

Daniel Walder
Principal