



Galway Chronicle



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Our Vision: Galway Elementary School will empower students to be valued, productive members of a global society.

The Galway Pledge : We pledge to respect one another, to be trustworthy and fair. We will care about each other, and be good citizens. Above all else, I will take responsibility for my actions, in a quest to build a better you...and a better me.

Principally Speaking: “Returning to School”

The Board of Education met on December 15th to discuss and take action on a plan for the return of students to in-person learning. During the meeting, MCPS staff provided an update on current health conditions in the county, results of the parent preference survey and expectations for the return of students to school buildings.

As a result of the meeting, the board voted to delay the return of students for in-person instruction until February 1, 2021, on the condition that established health metrics are met. The Board will meet again on January 12 to determine if school can begin on February 1 at 11:00 am

At this time, we do not have additional information to share regarding finalized plans for a phased return to partial in-person instruction for families that indicated this preference, but we are working closely with our staff and MCPS central office partners to determine staffing and program needs. 78.6% of Galway families responded to the return to school survey. Our MCPS parent survey data indicated that 64.5% of our students wished to remain virtual and 35.5% indicated a preference for a partial in-person instructional program.

MCPS has developed a health metrics grid for a phased-in return to in-person instruction. The grid is aligned with CDC guidelines and was developed in consultation with Montgomery County health officials.. We remain committed to providing a high-quality education to all MCPS students in the virtual model. We will continue to thoughtfully plan and collaborate with the Board of Education, MCPS staff and the community on our reopening efforts, while keeping safety at the forefront. <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/mainstory/story/674052/Health-Metrics/>

Diversity is not about how we differ. Diversity is about embracing one another's uniqueness. – Ola Joseph

January

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 18
School Closed-Martin Luther King Day

January 20
Briggs Chaney Articulation Meeting
Principal's Tea 6:30-7:30 pm

January 21
Food Distribution-4:00

January 27
3rd -Materials Distribution 9:30-4:00

January 29
Schools Closed– Professional Day
3rd -Materials Distribution 9:30-4:00
End of Marking Period 2

CIVILITY STEPS

~ by Ty Howard

- 1) be polite
- 2) speak kind words
- 3) act with manners
- 4) give and show respect
- 5) lead by positive example

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Marking Period 3 Material Pick-up

Wednesday, January 27 & Friday, January 29

9:30 am-4:00 pm

Bring your child's name and id# and grade on a sheet of paper and pull up for a contactless pick-up of curriculum materials. Delivery in the car-loop lane.



Período de marcado 3 Recogida de materiales

Miércoles 27 de enero y Viernes 29 de enero

9:30 am-4:00 pm

Traiga el nombre y la identificación de su hijo en una hoja de papel y deténgase para una recogida sin contacto de los materiales del plan de estudios. Entrega en el carril del coche-loop.

Clothing for Cash

Time to clean out those closets and donate to Clothes for Cash. We would like to challenge the community to become one of the top three schools to donate in the area. If we become a top three school, we receive a bonus check that goes to classrooms. This is the time to clean out those closets. You can donate clothing and shoes in any shape.



MLK Week of Service

Honor the life and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by serving the Rockville community on MLK Day—and throughout the week surrounding the holiday. The Volunteer Center's annual MLK Day of Service event has gone virtual and expanded to a week this year, with a variety of home-based and safely distanced service opportunities available January 16-24, 2021. Projects range from activities like writing letters to isolated seniors to creating toys for service dogs. Choose to participate in one or many! They all help others in our community. (MCPS middle and high school students can earn SSL hours for most service projects except donations. Details outlined within each opportunity.)

You can explore opportunities here : [Montgomery County Volunteer Center](#)

MCPS Magnet Program Changes

MCPS has made changes to the selection process for magnet programs. This will impact the selection process for current 3rd graders in regards to the Centers for Enriched Studies program and for current 5th graders in regards to the Middle School Magnet programs. The MCPS K-12 Regional/CountyWide Programs website has been updated to include this new information. MCPS will review external data points and multiple measures, but will not be administering a program assessment. They have added an expert review panel and lottery selection process. Letters were sent to parents/guardians for 3rd and 5th graders detailing these changes. Please click [HERE](#) to access the updated website. Parent letters can be found in the links below.

[Grade 3 Parent Letter](#)

[Grade 5 Parent Letter](#)

MCPS Grade 3 Parent Meeting: January 13, 2021

For more information on the universal review for third grade students' participation in enriched and accelerated programming, parents/guardians are invited to tune in to an informational presentation regarding the program and admission process. This presentation will be available on the [MCPS website](#) at 6:00 p.m. (English) and 7:00 p.m. (Spanish) on **January 13**.

DISCUSSING DIFFICULT TOPICS WITH CHILDREN

The last year has been challenging for adults and children. We have experienced unprecedented events that have caused us to reflect on who we are, how we treat others and what kind of country we want to live in. I don't know about you, but I found myself flooded with many emotions from the daily toll of Covid-19, the marches for racial justice, a contentious election and then the riots at the nation's Capitol. These events have been unavoidable due to the pandemic shut-downs and our constant bombardment of news. We all desire for normal again, the world where kids went to school and parents went to work and people demonstrated tolerance for people different from them. One of the year's hardest jobs is trying to explain current events to young kids. Sometimes we need to turn the news off and censor how information is discussed around children.

"We are living in challenging times," says children's book author Matt de la Peña — and kids are taking a lot of it in. "While you and I read the news, watch the news, listen to the news — our young children are watching and reading *us*, and so they're not getting the whole picture," he says.

De la Peña believes books can explore deep or difficult issues without hitting them head-on. "I don't think the job of a picture book is to answer questions," he says. "I think it's just to explore interesting topics."

Books should begin conversations, he explains: "Sometimes those are silly conversations, sometimes they're educational conversations and sometimes, like now, they can be quite profound."

I have included a few books that may assist you in having these conversations with your children while still keeping them hopeful.

Acknowledging When Life Is Scary

De la Peña's 2018 book, [*Love*](#), illustrated by Loren Long, grapples with difficult subjects, too — in one illustration a child hides under a piano while his parents have an argument. In another, a child walks in as his family is taking in upsetting news on the television. De la Peña couches these fearful moments in the context of love and protection.

"I wanted a story that I could read to my daughter before bed that would make her feel good, considering that the news wasn't always so positive," de la Peña says. He says there are great books that are purely positive and reassuring, but he found that this sort of book didn't feel true to his experience as a parent.

"I had to at least acknowledge adversity because every child is going to be confronted with adversities throughout their life," he says.

For parents who are worried about shepherding their small people through difficult times, perhaps it will be helpful to remember that even award-winning children's book authors feel daunted by this responsibility: "I'm afraid of those moments as a parent, too," de la Peña says.



For A Child Experiencing Anxiety: [*There Might Be Lobsters*](#) by Carolyn Crimi, illustrated by Laurel Molk (for ages 3 to 7)

There Might Be Lobsters tells the story of Suki, a dog who is scared of the beach. The waves, the sand, the possible lobsters — it's a lot for a little dog to worry about, and de la Peña says that kids living through these times will get that.

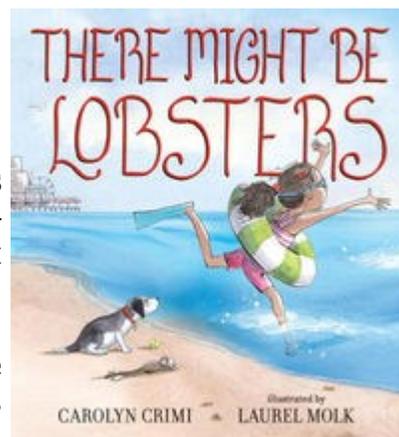
"I think so many kids right now can't really identify why they're anxious," de la Peña says. "But there's this feeling, there's this darkness inside of them."

While adults may try to examine and understand their anxiety, de la Peña says, "kids are experiencing it viscerally."

Eleanor, Sukie's human, does her best to ease her dog's fears. But it's only when Sukie's stuffed toy, Chunka Munka, gets taken by a wave that the little dog finds the courage to get into the ocean.

"What I love about this book is we see a dog who is pushed out of her comfort zone," de la Peña says. "It's great to read today with kids because so many of us are forced out of our comfort zones."

The book touches on difficult themes — fear, anxiety, lack of control — but in a manageable way. "You can have a young reader who doesn't really consciously put their finger on the anxiety that's being explored — they just like the lobster story," says de la Peña. "But viscerally, I'm sure they're getting something."

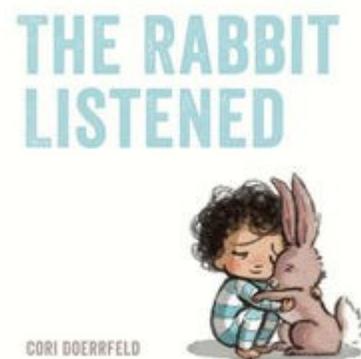


For A Child Who Is Upset: [*The Rabbit Listened*](#) by Cori Doerrfeld (for ages 3 to 5)

Even adults have trouble knowing how best to support someone who is experiencing a loss. This is a story that reminds kids — and their grown-ups — that sometimes the best thing to do is to just be present and bear witness.

Taylor is so disappointed when his amazing block tower comes tumbling down. Several animal friends stop by to help: The chicken wants to talk about it; the hyena wants to laugh about it; the elephant wants to rebuild it; the ostrich wants to hide from it. But none of that helps Taylor feel better.

Finally, "rabbit comes in quietly and just sits with Taylor, allowing the child to process the small tragedy organically," de la Peña says. He says this picture book offers helpful guidance in "how to best support a young person who is upset."



For A Child Searching For Their Place In The World: [The Adventures of Beekle](#) by Dan Santat (for ages 4 to 8)

An imaginary friend is born on an imaginary island — all he has to do is wait to be chosen by a real child. But after nights and nights of waiting he decides he must fight for his own fate.

"He takes matters into his own hands and builds a ship and sails into the real world on his own," de la Peña says.

After a long journey he finds himself in a busy city where at last he meets a little girl who "felt just right." She names him Beekle, and they take off on "unimaginable" adventures.

"I love the way this book explores the psychology of how a child can marry the dreamy world of childhood imagination with the real world and human friendships," de la Peña says.



For A Child Feeling Stuck: [When Stars Are Scattered](#) by Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed, illustrated by Victoria Jamieson and Iman Geddy (for ages 9 to 12)

Many kids may feel stuck at home — away from friends, relatives and school — during lockdown. So de la Peña suggests a graphic novel that tells the true story of Omar Mohamed, a Somali refugee who grew up in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya.

"There's a line in this book that kind of hits today's climate head on," de la Peña says, when Mohamed talks about just waiting for his life to begin.

"I feel like so many of us are feeling the same way and so are our children," de la Peña says.

Graphic novels and picture books can be a great way to explore tough subjects with kids who aren't comfortable reading yet.

"Sometimes we can have visual learning happening alongside textual learning ..." de la Peña says. "We can read the faces of the characters."

Parents should remember that there are many different ways for a child to read. "I think it's important not to put too much pressure on children to read at our pace, but to read at their own pace," de la Peña says. "That's what I love about picture books. You can enter the story via text or via illustration and ultimately, you know, kids are going to get to both."

