



240-740-1420

December, 2019

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## *Greencastle Gazette*

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We hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and enjoyed quality time with family and friends. December is a shortened month, but an important one. We have three full weeks of school before Winter Break. This is an exciting time of year for many children, and we appreciate any and all support at home to remind the students to stay focused on their work. There is a lot of learning that can happen in three weeks!

Now that we are into cooler weather, please help your child remember to come to school dressed appropriately. We will try our best to have the students outside for recess as much as possible throughout the winter, and we want all the kids to be able to stay warm. If you need assistance with obtaining jackets, gloves, hats, etc., please contact our counselors, Claris Brock and Lauren Kline, or our Parent Community Coordinator, Leocadie Bader.

With winter on the way, we know we may soon see ice and snow that may cause school closures, delayed openings, and/or early releases. Please see the Winter Weather section below for information on all the different ways you can monitor the status of MCPS schools.

### **ARRIVAL TIME AND PROCEDURES**

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We wanted to clarify our morning arrival procedures:

- Students should not be dropped off before 8:40 a.m. We do not have staff available to monitor students until that time, and we need to be able to ensure everyone's safety.
- Students line up on the blacktop as they arrive. In case of inclement weather, we hold indoor lineup in the gym. Lines begin to proceed to classrooms when the bell rings at 8:45 a.m.
- All students must be in their classroom by 9:00 a.m.
- Students who arrive after the bell rings at 9:00 a.m. must first come to the main office to obtain a late pass before heading to class. Recently, we have begun to see some students come to the blacktop after 9:00. While we welcome late arrivers with open arms, those students will now be directed to the main office first before going to class.
- Students arriving after 9:00 should enter through the front doors *with a parent* so the parent can sign the student in.
- Classroom teachers submit their attendance to the main office before 9:15 a.m.

Timeliness is important so students do not miss morning routines and the beginning of their instructional day. Please help to set your child up for a successful day by ensuring they are on time.



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## **FARMS UPDATE**

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A huge thank you to everyone who turned in an application for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) during our push for this earlier in the fall! As a result of everyone's efforts, we have a significant increase in our school's FARMS percentage. Our official percentage for this school year, as shown by our data on October 31<sup>st</sup>, is 67.68%. This is a gain of over eight percentage points from last year's data of 59.29%, which is fantastic!

From here, we await word from MCPS to see if this gain is enough for Greencastle to become a Title I school next year. We will keep you updated as we hear additional information.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

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Over the past few weeks as students have started bringing warmer clothing for recess, we have seen our Lost and Found grow exponentially (see below).

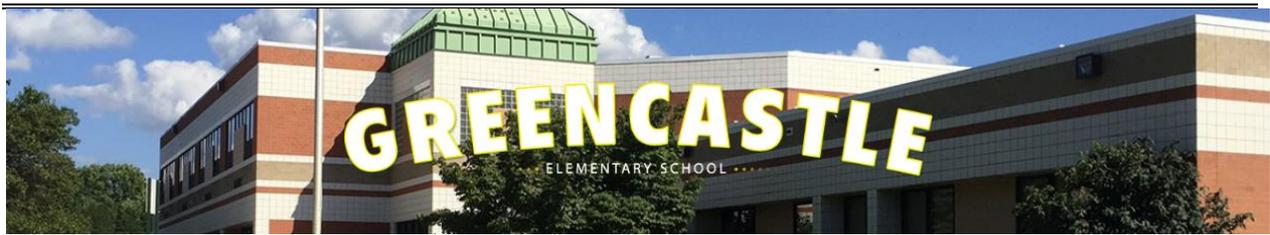
If your child has lost an article of clothing, please have him or her come check the Lost and Found located in the hallway near the main office. Any items that are still here by the time we get to Winter Break at the end of the month will be donated.



## **PTA NEWS YOU CAN USE**

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The Scholastic Book Fair is December 2-7 in the Media Center. Books can also be ordered online via our book fair website through December 8<sup>th</sup>: <https://www.scholastic.com/bf/greencastle>.



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We also encourage parents to take advantage of the e-wallet, which allows you to set an amount so that students don't have to carry cash or a check to school. It's super easy and you can set up the e-wallet any time during the book fair via the fair website.

The next PTA meeting will be held on **Tuesday, December 10** in the Multipurpose Room at 7:00. Light dinner will be served and the meeting will begin at 7:15 p.m. The meeting will feature a review of the **NEW READING CURRICULUM**. So, you don't want to miss this! Childcare will be provided.

Please remember to join the PTA. Your membership dues and volunteer support go a long way towards making a positive contribution to our school. Together we are better!

## **WINTER WEATHER – STAY INFORMED**

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Winter weather is coming soon. MCPS offers numerous ways for parents to learn about school closures, delayed openings, and early dismissals due to inclement weather.

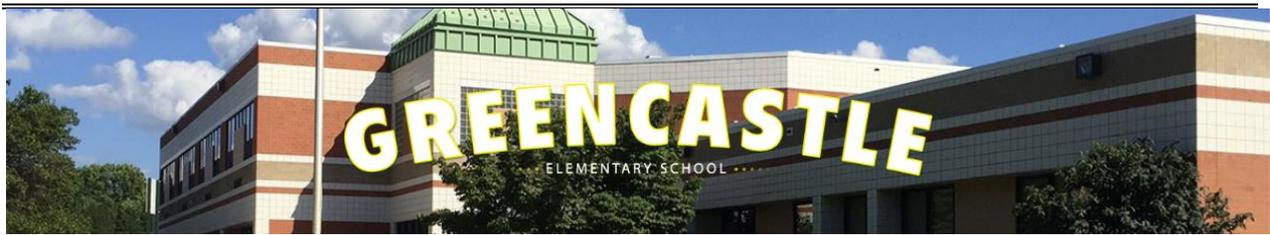
- **AlertMCPS:** [Subscribe to AlertMCPS](#)
  - Receive text messages or emails from MCPS during weather-related emergencies and other major events that impact school system operations. Parents can also sign up to receive alerts specific to their child's school.
- **MCPS homepage:** [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org)
- **MCPS cable channels:** Comcast 34, Verizon 36 or RCN 89
- **Recorded information:** 301-279-3673
- **Ask MCPS:** 240-740-3000
  - Staff takes calls from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, in English and Spanish.
- **Twitter:** [twitter.com/mcps](https://twitter.com/mcps)
- **Local radio and TV stations**

Visit [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/sources.aspx](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/emergency/sources.aspx) for more information on how to receive MCPS emergency information.

## **STEP TEAM**

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The Greencastle Royalty Steppers Step Team will begin tryouts the first week of February. This program has been made possible through a partnership with Strathmore. A professional Step Afrika stepper from Strathmore will instruct the team along with Ms. Pierre-Louis, one of our second-grade



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teachers. Flyers will be passed out to students in third through fifth-grade following winter break. Space is limited and students will be required to attend practice two times per week with a culminating showcase on May 20<sup>th</sup>. Practice dates are still being determined.

Additionally, **students who participated on the step team last school year** will be invited on a Strathmore sponsored field trip to see Step Afrika on Sunday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. Transportation will be provided by Strathmore. Students must attend this trip with a family member. Permission slips for the field trip will be passed out before winter break and tickets will be given to students on a first-come, first-serve basis. Tickets are limited for this event.

## **COUNSELORS' CORNER**

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Welcome to our December edition of our Counselor's Corner! We want to start by thanking all of our parents, guardians, and relatives who participated in "Take Your Child to School Day". It was wonderful having everyone join us for donuts and coffee at Greencastle Elementary School. We truly appreciate and value all of your support! We will continue to have more activities throughout the year to maintain and strengthen the engagement with our school community.

Mental Health Awareness week was a huge success. We hope your children and you will continue to practice self-care and "Be Kind to your Mind". If you were unable to pick up resources on the morning of "Take Your Child to School Day" or would like any additional resources, please let us know. We are happy to provide information. We will be continuing class lessons this month on topics that aim to improve mental health and awareness.

As always, please feel free to reach out to us with any concerns or comments. We are always here for you and your children!

Mrs. Brock and Mrs. Kline

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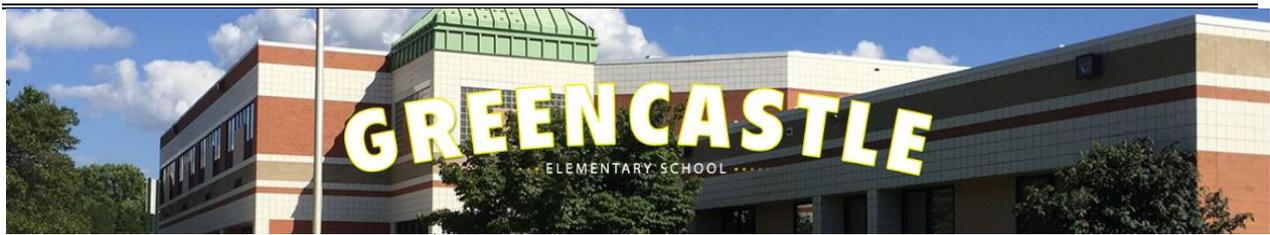
[Claris A Brock@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Claris_A_Brock@mcpsmd.org)

[Lauren G Kline@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Lauren_G_Kline@mcpsmd.org)

## **BOX TOPS**

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For over twenty years, Box Tops for Education has given families an easy way to earn cash for their school with products they already buy. Now, you can simply scan your store receipt with the Box Tops mobile app to identify participating products and instantly add cash to our school's earnings online! A helpful how-to video can be found here: <https://youtu.be/Hh94b2BvFK4>.



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## **MCPS COMMUNITY CONVERSATION: THE NEW CURRICULUM**

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Please join MCPS curriculum leaders to learn more about the new curriculum, its implementation, key highlights, and available resources and supports for parents/guardians. During the live presentation and virtual conversation, online questions will be answered. Questions can be submitted online and via text message now and through the duration of the live TV program. The program will be live on MCPS TV (Comcast 34/998 HD, Verizon 36, and RCN 89) and online at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org).

## **DISTRICTWIDE BOUNDARY ANALYSIS MEETINGS**

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The MCPS Districtwide Boundary Analysis is an initiative designed to provide a comprehensive assessment of Montgomery County Public School boundaries by analyzing factors such as:

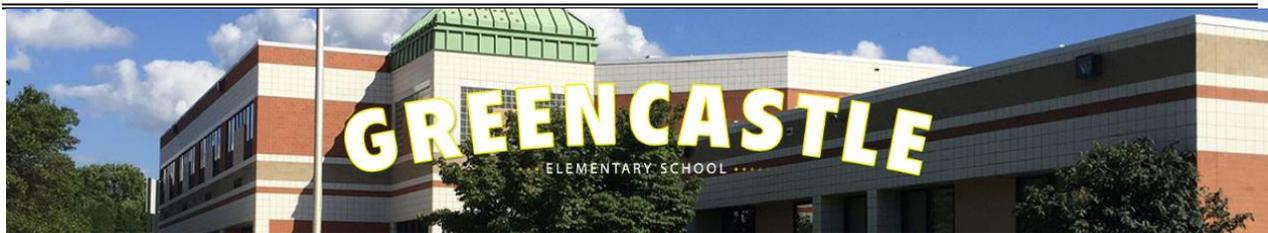
- School facility utilization and capacity
- Student demographics
- School assignment
- Travel patterns

This initiative will result in an analytical assessment and a summary of the community engagement process. It will not make recommendations on potential boundary revisions.

As part of this assessment, a series of regional public meetings will be held in six locations around the county in December and January. All residents of Montgomery County are invited to attend to learn more about the Boundary Analysis process and give feedback on opportunities and challenges with our public schools. Each meeting will have the same format and content. The dates and locations of the meetings are as follows:

- December 4 at Gaithersburg High School
- December 11 at Julius West Middle School
- December 14 at White Oak Middle Oak
- January 7 at Walter Johnson High School
- January 11 at Montgomery Blair High School
- January 14 at Northwest High School

Each meeting will have the same format and content. Learn more at [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boundary-analysis](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/boundary-analysis).



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## **NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN FOR SUPPORTING SERVICES AWARD**

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Nominations are now open for the Supporting Services Employee of the Year Award. This award recognizes a supporting services employee who extends himself/herself beyond the basic required duties and contributes to students and the school community by enhancing student learning, creating positive relationships, and making the school and/or office a better place.

Nominees must be active support professionals with a minimum of three years of service with MCPS. Parents/guardians, students, staff, and community members can nominate. The recipient will receive a \$1,000 cash award. **The deadline is 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 19.** You can submit your nominations at [www.seiu500.org/mcps-employee-of-the-year](http://www.seiu500.org/mcps-employee-of-the-year).

## **KNOW AN OUTSTANDING STAFF MEMBER?**

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Awards season has arrived! Nominations are open for several competitions to honor exceptional teachers, support staff, and principals. Visit [news.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/quicknotes/know-an-outstanding-teacher-supporting-staff-member-or-principal/](http://news.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/quicknotes/know-an-outstanding-teacher-supporting-staff-member-or-principal/) to see the full list of awards and deadlines.

## **JOIN THE MCPS FAMILY ENGAGEMENT ADVISORY TEAM**

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Parents, guardians, and members of the community are invited to apply to be a part of the newly formed MCPS Family Engagement Advisory Team. The purpose of the Family Engagement Advisory Team is to provide opportunities for MCPS families to learn about and provide input and feedback on the district's programs and initiatives.

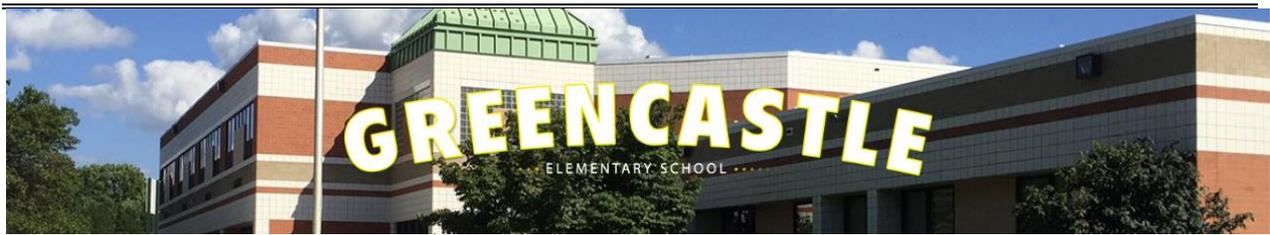
MCPS is committed to improving students' school experience and academic success and ensuring equitable learning opportunities by engaging families in decision-making and program review. The Family Engagement Advisory Team will meet at least seven times during the school year and members will be required to serve a two-year term.

Applications are due by **Friday, December 13**. Applications are available at each school, by calling the Division of Student, Family and School Services at 240-740-4620, or online at [news.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Family-Engagement-Advisory-Team-Application.pdf](http://news.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Family-Engagement-Advisory-Team-Application.pdf).

## **WINTER COAT DRIVE UNDER WAY**

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The MCPS Prekindergarten/Head Start Programs are collecting new winter coats for students. They are seeking donations of boys' and girls' coats in sizes 5, 6, 6X, 7, and 8, along with other winter wear,



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such as hats and gloves. Donations can be sent to Rocking Horse Road Center, 4910 Macon Road, Room 141, Rockville, Maryland 20852. For more information, contact Ms. Lisa W. Conlon, social services specialist, at 240-740-4530.

## **MCPS LAUNCHES UNITED WE LEARN CONTEST**

Montgomery County Public Schools is launching the fourth year of its student contest, United We Learn. This year's contest, United We Learn: Innovative Communication Challenge, encourages students to think about how communication affects their daily lives, and how technology can be used to enhance communication.

Elementary school students are challenged to design a web page that shares information of importance about their school, addresses communication barriers, strengthens the home-school connections and positively impacts the MCPS community. The contest will take place in two phases and the winning proposals will be developed into web pages by MCPS Web Services on the students' elementary schools' websites. Winners will have the opportunity to participate in the development process.

To learn more about the contest, visit [www.mcpsunitedwelearn.org](http://www.mcpsunitedwelearn.org).

## **ANNUAL USED CAR, COMPUTER SALE COMING DECEMBER 7**

Students in the Montgomery County Students Automotive Trades Foundation (ATF) and Information Technology Foundation (ITF) will be selling used cars and computers that they have refurbished on Saturday, December 7 at Gaithersburg High School, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Gaithersburg High School is located at 101 Education Boulevard in Gaithersburg.

The cars and computers are refurbished and reconditioned by the students as part of their classroom and lab studies. The sales provide students with the opportunity to practice their sales skills, earn Student Service Learning hours, and develop a deeper appreciation for community involvement. A list of available cars for purchase will be posted online at [www.cars2purchase.org/](http://www.cars2purchase.org/) in mid-November.

## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>School Events</b>
December 2-6	Book Fair – Media Center
December 6	Assembly for Instrumental Music Students – Air Force Band – 9:15-10:15 a.m. Kids Night Out sponsored from Kids After Hours – 6:30-9:30 p.m.
December 10	PTA Meeting – 7:00-8:30 p.m.
December 11	Make-Up Fall Pictures
December 12	No School for PEP and Pre-K Students



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Date	School Events
December 13	Kindergarten Gingerbread Houses – MPR – 9:00-10:15 a.m. 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Field Trip to Science Center in Baltimore – 9:40-2:10
December 18	Interims Distributed
December 19	Cultural Arts Assembly – Music with a Message Grades 3-5 – 9:15-9:50 Grades K-2 – 9:55-10:30
December 20	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade Gingerbread House Decorating – MPR – 9:15-10:15 a.m.
December 21- January 1	Winter Break
January 2	Students and Staff Return from Winter Break
January 17	KAH Kids’ Night Out – evening in MPR
January 20	No School – Holiday
January 24	Early Release – K-5 Students Dismissed at 12:55 p.m. AM Pre-K Dismissed at 10:55 a.m. PEP 5-Hour Dismissed at 11:30 a.m. No PM Pre-K, PEP Classic, PEP Collaboration, or PEP INC End of Marking Period 2 PTA Chuck E. Cheese Night
January 27	No School for Students – Professional Day for Staff
January 30	Family Math Night – 6:00-7:30 p.m.
January 31	Green and Gold Assemblies (Invitations to be sent home prior) - Gym Grades 3-5 – 9:30-10:30 a.m. Kindergarten-Grade 2 – 2:15-3:15 p.m.