# The Sea Turtle Times

**Flora M. Singer Elementary School**  
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This week</td>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>10/18</td>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>10/20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kids Helping Kids Food Drive Opens</td>
<td>4th Grade Field Trip</td>
<td>NaNoWriMo Club begins, 8:15 in the media center</td>
<td>Book Fair Opens</td>
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<td>Next Week</td>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>10/27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Day—No School for Students</td>
<td>5th Grade Field Trip</td>
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<td>10/28</td>
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<td>International Parent Coffee—9:45 a.m. in the Staff Lounge</td>
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<td>Last Day for Book Fair</td>
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<td>PTA Movie Night—6:30 pm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table of Contents**

- **Fall Festival**  
  *New this week!*
- **No School Next Monday**  
  *New this week!*
- **Lost and Found**  
  *New this week!*
- **Kids Helping Kids Food Drive**
- **Novel Writing Club**

- **Singer Needs Group**
- **Middle School Magnet Consortium**
- **Holiday Help for Thanksgiving and December Holidays - Holiday Giving Project**
- **MCPS Shift to Structured Literacy**
Fall Festival

We are very excited to announce the return of the Fall Festival to Singer Elementary School! We will host the Fall Festival on Monday, October 31st, 2022.

Fall Festival consists of three things:

- A Halloween costume parade
- Halloween-themed classroom parties
- The Fall Fun Fest hosted by KAH

Students participating in the parade and classroom parties may wear their Halloween costumes. There will be time for them to change in the afternoon. Pretend weapons are not allowed as part of any costume and particularly frightening masks should be avoided.

Many of our families do not celebrate Halloween. Their students will be invited to the Fall Fun Fest in the lunch room hosted by KAH. KAH brings fun games, activities, and snacks. There will be no mention of Halloween. The Fun Fest is going to be great, and kids have certainly enjoyed it in previous years. It is very important that parents who want their children to go to the Fun Fest let their teacher know.

The schedule for the Fall Festival on Monday, October 31:

1:45 Students can start to prepare for the parade and parents can begin to arrive to watch the parade (parents may be on grounds but not in the building)
2:15 Students who will be participating in the Fun Fest will be sent to the APR
2:30  Halloween Costume Parade Starts
3:00  Classroom Parties-visitors may sign in to attend
3:45  Dismissal begins for everyone

Room parents and volunteers may enter the building earlier in the day to set up the classroom parties. This should be done Friday afternoon or during the lunch and recess hour for each grade level. Those time blocks are:

11:20-12:30 for 1st & 2nd
12:00-1:00 for 3rd & 4th
12:30-1:30 for K & 5th

We look forward to everyone enjoying the Fall Festival!

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No School Next Monday

School will be closed next Monday, October 24th for a professional day.

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Lost and Found

Our Lost and Found is already overflowing. Please be sure to check it. It is next to the second set of doors into the APR, across the hall from the master staircase. Anything that still remains in the Lost and Found will be donated to charity or discarded on Tuesday, November 1st.

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Kids Helping Kids Food Drive

Each October we partner with Manna, our local food center, to raise money and resources for our community. This year there are two ways to participate.
1. Beginning now: Visit our fundraising page to donate money directly to Manna. 
   https://secure.qgiv.com/event/khk22/team/907826/
2. The week of October 17th: Students can donate shelf stable items at school. 
   **If donating from your own pantry, PLEASE CHECK EXPIRATION DATES**

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Novel Writing Club

NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) Club is a free extracurricular activity offered to Flora Singer students in 2nd through 5th grade. NaNoWriMo is a national program in which students are challenged to write an entire novel in just one month! The emphasis is on good creative storytelling rather than on grammar or spelling.

Club meetings will be Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:15-9:00 in the media center from October 20 to December 1. Please contact club sponsor Lauren Whitney at lauren.e.whitney@mcpsmd.net with any questions or to register your child.

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Singer Needs Group

Singer Needs Social Gathering and Email List
Singer Needs is an organization for the families of students who have IEPs and/or who are in the Learning Center. If you would like to join the Singer Needs email list, please email singerneeds@singerpta.org to be added. This is how Singer Needs families stay in touch and learn about opportunities relevant to our kids! Note that the list from previous years has been reset, so please sign up again even if you got emails in the past.

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Middle School Magnet Consortium

5th grade parents, please review this flyer or view the presentation linked below for more information about the optional choice lottery process for middle school.

Program overview presentations:
  ● English Presentation
  ● Presentación en español
If you are interested in applying, this link will go live on October 14th: http://bit.ly/choiceMSMC_. Your child must be logged into their MCPS account to access the link.

Rainbow Club for Students in Gr. K-5 (Virtual Activity)

Rainbow Club is a safe and supportive place for LGBTQ+ students and allies to connect and build community. During our time together we'll engage in activities like playing games, picture book-read alouds, and discussions about identity, diversity and inclusivity. Click here to learn more.

Holiday Help for Thanksgiving and December Holidays - Holiday Giving Project

***Late Registration Deadline for Thanksgiving - October 26th***
***Late Registration Deadline for December Holidays - November 16th***

If you and your family are in need and would like to be referred for possible assistance for the holiday season, please complete the referral form to provide the required information. Resources are limited: please apply only if you and your family are truly in need. While a referral is not a guarantee of assistance, the Project helps as many families in need as donations allow.

The Holiday Giving Project has provided Thanksgiving and December holiday assistance to low-income households for over 30 years. A network of social workers, school counselors, and human service professionals refer families in need of assistance. Local non-profits, faith-based organizations, and public agencies serve Holiday Giving recipients, as donations are available.

Click Below to Complete the Request Form

https://forms.gle/7Z89WpK7Uk24cWbX6
Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival begins at 9:00 am. Students may enter the building at that time and go to line up. Kindergarteners and 5th graders go to the gym. Everyone else goes to the lunch room. **Do not drop your child off prior to 9:00 a.m. They will be unsupervised.**

Dismissal begins at 3:50. You may arrive prior to 3:50 to wait for dismissal. Kindergarteners are dismissed through the doors by the gym. Walkers, car riders and bus riders are dismissed from the front doors. **Parents must contact the main office before 3:00 p.m. with any dismissal changes for the day.**

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Immunizations and Medications

It is very important that your child is up-to-date on his/her immunizations. If you are not sure, please check with your doctor. **The state law mandates that children not be admitted to school without the proper immunizations.** Medications must be brought to school in the original container by an adult along with **MCPS Form 525-13 (Authorization to Administer Prescribed Medication)** completed by your physician. Medication will not be administered without proper authorization. Please contact our Health Technician if you have any questions.

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School Lunch Application and SchoolCash Online

Please see this document. It outlines how to apply for free and reduced-priced lunch & for SchoolCash Online. Breakfast is free for any Flora M. Singer Elementary student who would like it. **However, lunch is no longer free for everyone.** The full price is $2.55 per lunch.

[Copy of Information about Money-Related Needs]
PTA Update

Parent Social
Thursday, October 20 for Grades 3 - 5
6:30-8:00 pm, Flora Singer Gym
Get to know your fellow parents at 3rd - 5th grade Parent Social. KAH will provide childcare for $10 per child (bring cash, includes dinner). RSVP by Monday so KAH knows how much staffing is needed. We will provide pizza for all. Please bring dessert and/or non-alcoholic drinks to share.

Scholastic Book Fair
The Flora Singer Scholastic Book Fair is October 21 - 28! For more information check out the Book Fair Homepage.

There are few more spots open to volunteer! Join us for this special event to share your love of books with Singer students! To volunteer, click here.

Join Seasonal Roots
Support Flora Singer PTA by joining Seasonal Roots, an online farmers market that delivers “dirt to doorstep” to families in Maryland and Virginia. The membership fee is 50% off and Seasonal Roots will donate $20 to Flora M. Singer Elementary School PTA! Find out more and join here.

MCPS Shift to Structured Literacy

On Tuesday September 20th, Ms. Ragin presented to the PTA about MCPS’s shift to structured literacy. Here are the responses to the questions from the community.

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<th>Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
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<td>Can we see the documents those in the room are seeing?</td>
<td>The Really Great Reading materials and decodable books that were available for the PTA membership to review during the meeting will be on view in the staff lounge through the 31st. In addition, you can also view the Really Great Reading materials at <a href="https://www.reallygreatreading.com/">https://www.reallygreatreading.com/</a>.</td>
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<td>How much training have teachers had and how much they have going forward?</td>
<td>Structured Literacy training began in Summer 2022. Training will continue</td>
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throughout the school year on professional days and during grade-level team meetings. Here are all of the trainings that have occurred, so far:

- *The Shift to Structured Literacy (K-5 teachers, reading specialists and staff development teachers)*
- *Leading the Shift to Structured Literacy (Core leadership teams)*
- *DIBELS Assessment Training (K-2 teachers, reading specialists, staff development teachers and special education teachers)*
- *Really Great Reading Training (K-2 teachers and reading specialists)*
- Collaborative Planning for Structured Literacy (K-5 teachers)
- The Shift to Structured Literacy for Paraeducators (K-5 paraeducators)

Upcoming trainings include:

- Structured Literacy and Benchmark
- Decodables
- Planning for, Collecting, and Using Formative Data
- Small Group Instruction
- Sound Walls
- The Writing Rope

### How is the school supporting the teachers, and how are they providing oversight and assistance to the teachers?

Ms. Ragin will model lessons for teachers and provide feedback about instruction. Teachers will also receive routine support from both Ms. Ragin (Reading Specialist) and Ms. Martin (Staff Development Teacher) when planning for instruction, administering literacy assessments and interpreting assessment data.

### Can you comment on why the approach changes over time and if this is evidence-based, what was the previous approach based on?

The change to a structured literacy approach comes in response to the most recent research called the Science of Reading. This science consists of brain-based research that shows how students best learn how to read and write in all grades.

Previously, a balanced literacy approach was used in MCPS and in school systems across the country. Students were taught using leveled texts and lessons focused on comprehension. Phonics instruction focused
on the skills needed to read a particular book instead of systematic phonics instruction that would help readers apply decoding skills to any text. The balanced literacy approach has been refuted by the body of research known as the Science of Reading. It is not effective for students in marginalized populations, including Emergent Multilingual Learners, students of color and students with dyslexia.

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<tr>
<th>If our students are starting this program in 2nd grade, how will they catch up in the program that is typically taught in K &amp; 1?</th>
<th>In grades K-2, teachers will use data from the Benchmark curriculum Foundations &amp; Routines lessons, along with data from the DIBELS assessments to determine students’ literacy needs. In addition, the Really Great Reading curriculum for second grade contains 4 weeks of supplemental units that give students additional practice with skills and concepts from 1st grade.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a discussion or plans to switch away from Benchmark to a curriculum that is fully rooted in structured literacy? Or how will you make sure there’s enough class time spent on structured literacy when teachers also have to use Benchmark?</td>
<td>The instructional schedule includes 120 minutes daily for literacy instruction. This allows for the time to teach all components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension in the sequential and systematic way that is aligned with a structured literacy approach. At this time, no announcements have been made about plans to adopt a new curriculum.</td>
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<td>Does this new approach extend to middle school?</td>
<td>Yes, secondary is also moving towards a Structured Literacy approach by emphasizing content and linking literacy skills in the content areas, emphasizing vocabulary, and explicitly teaching comprehension strategies within content area reading.</td>
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<td>How can we support our kids when they’re reading at home to stop guessing and do more sounding out/decoding?</td>
<td>Decodable texts give students an opportunity to practice the phonics skills they are learning in class without having to guess.</td>
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<td>Does this mean the school is moving away from Lucy Calkins?</td>
<td>At Singer, teachers used the writing workshop model included in the Lucy Calkins Writing Units of Study before the Benchmark Curriculum was adopted. Teachers can still use the Lucy Calkins Writing Units of Study</td>
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<td>You stated “SL (structured literacy) has been shown to work for nearly all students.” For which students does SL not work well?</td>
<td>SL does not work for about 5% to 10% of the population; these are students with profound learning differences. There is a small part of the population for whom any approach to instruction will not result in functional literacy, but we can't identify those students until they have been afforded the opportunity to engage in research supported literacy instruction.</td>
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<td>How does structured literacy approach enrichment? Specific examples? (My assumption was that small group reading groups = enrichment.)</td>
<td>Data will be collected routinely to determine students’ needs, including needs for enrichment opportunities. Groups can focus on enrichment of language skills, word study skills, vocabulary learning, close reading of complex text, reading comprehension at a deeper level and student-facilitated groups known as literature circles.</td>
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