August 2022

There have been changes to some school policies. Please review the following document carefully.

In order to keep our students, staff and community safe, MCPS is continually reviewing data and making policy and protocol adjustments. Please be assured that we will communicate any further adjustments as they occur.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we prepare for the start of school, we hope that you enjoyed the summer months and had an opportunity for relaxation and fun. We would like to welcome our new families as they join the Somerset community. We know you will be impressed with the community’s dedication to make Somerset the best school possible. We hope that during the year we will be able to call upon all parents as we work together for the children of Somerset.

The first day of school for students is Monday, August 29, 2022. The school day for kindergarten through fifth grade is 9:00 a.m. to 3:25 p.m. We look forward to having another successful and exciting school year with your child(ren). We will continue to focus on instructional strategies, activities and objectives, which will promote success for all of our students at all levels. After you drop off your child(ren), please join the PTA for their Welcome Back Coffee on the purple playground at the side of the school from 9:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m. on August 29.

I would like to update you regarding staff changes for the 2022-2023 school year.

We are bidding farewell to:
- Mrs. Susan Bausch, paraeducator, has accepted a position at Damascus Elementary.
- Ms. Sima Beigi, classroom monitor, has plans to continue her education.
- Mrs. Erin Derrow, 2nd grade teacher, has accepted a position at Sherwood Elementary.
- Mrs. Ingra Eiland, paraeducator, has accepted a position at Georgian Forest Elementary.
- Ms. Katie Fulton, resource teacher, has accepted a position at Sequoyah Elementary.
- Mrs. Leslie Haller, 1st grade teacher, has accepted a position at Cedar Grove Elementary.
- Mr. Rich House, PE teacher, has retired.
- Ms. Kym Hurley, 2nd grade teacher, has retired.
- Mrs. Rachel Lyons, Kindergarten teacher, has accepted a position at Goshen Elementary.
- Ms. Savannah Quinn, 4th grade teacher, has relocated to New Jersey.
- Ms. Hillary Reed, 4th grade teacher, has accepted a position at Brooke Grove Elementary.
- Mrs. Monica Rose, 5th grade teacher, has accepted a position at Potomac Elementary.
- Ms. Sonne Scarola, counselor, has accepted a position at Little Bennett Elementary.
- Mrs. Jenna Smith, 1st grade teacher, has accepted a position at Wyngate Elementary.
Mrs. Roxanne Speight, speech pathologist, has resigned to write children’s books.
Mr. David Spitzberg, instrumental music teacher has accepted a shared position at Wilson
Wims Elementary and Snowden Farms Elementary.
Mrs. Maureen Turner, acting principal, has accepted a principal position at Luxmanor
Elementary.

The following staff are changing their roles at Somerset:
Mr. Andrew Beiglarbeigie, was a teacher in 1st grade, and will now be a teacher in 4th grade.
Mrs. Meghan Rivera, was a teacher in 4th grade, and will now be a teacher in 1st grade.

Please join me in welcoming the following staff members to Somerset who either began at Somerset
during the last school year or will begin their new assignments this fall:

Ms. Ehlem Aslam joins our staff as a 1st grade teacher.
Mrs. Priyanka Dissanayake joined our staff as a paraeducator during the last school year.
Ms. Emily Freilich joins our staff as a speech pathologist.
Mr. Jose Garcia joined our building services staff during the last school year.
Mrs. Amanda Hishmeh joined our staff as a paraeducator during the last school year.
Ms. Amanda Kim joins our staff as an instrumental music teacher.
Ms. Kent Kolb joins our staff as a resource teacher
Ms. Tiffany McLean joined our staff as a media assistant during the school year.
Mrs. Kate Musser joins our staff as our counselor.
Mr. Daniel O’doe joins our staff as a resource teacher.
Mr. Carlos Salvador joined our building services staff during the last school year.
Ms. Karin Tulchinsky-Cohen (Ms. TC) joins our staff as our assistant principal.
Mr. Garrett Wong joins our staff as our PE teacher.

Mask Policy
Face coverings are not required in the school buildings at this time, however you are welcome
to wear a mask. Masking requirements will be reviewed regularly and are subject to change as the district
reviews guidance from federal, state and local health officials.

Date Reminders
Our annual Sneak Peek will be held on Friday, August 26th, from 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. At this
time, students and parents are invited to come to school to meet their "new" classroom teachers, see
their new classrooms, and to receive any other pertinent information about school. This is an informal,
but important occasion to "kick off" the new school year; however, it is not the appropriate time for
conferences or special requests. There is also a New Family Parent Orientation scheduled from 9:30-
10:30 a.m., on August 26, 2022 in the All Purpose Room. Please note that this meeting is for parents only;
however, all kindergarten and new students are invited to school during the 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Sneak
Peek to visit their classrooms and meet their teachers.

The PTA is holding a play date to welcome new families to Somerset Elementary School on
Sunday, August 28, 2022. Current families and new families are welcome to the big playground at
Norwood Park from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. to casually meet and greet while the kids play. You bring the
water bottles, and the PTA will have snacks. It'll be a great time for everyone, so please join in!
**Recommended School Supplies**

A list of recommended school supplies by grade level is included later in this packet.

If you purchased supply kits, they will be delivered to each child’s classroom prior to the first day of school. Supply kits will not be available for purchase during Sneak Peek.

**Cafeteria News**

MCPS will resume regular meal services during the 2022–2023 school year.

**Meal Prices:** Breakfast - $1.30; Lunch - $2.55

Beginning this year students who qualify for reduced-price meals will not be charged for breakfast or lunch meals.

Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) applications have been updated for the new school year and are now available online at [www.MySchoolApps.com](http://www.MySchoolApps.com). (We expect hard copies of the applications in the school office shortly. Please call the school office at 240-740-1100 after August 22nd if you'd like us to send a hard copy home in your child's backpack.) Households are not required to apply for meal benefits. However, all households who think they may be eligible are encouraged to apply. Please note that FARMS eligibility from the 2021-2022 school year will expire after the 30th scheduled school day, unless a new 2022-2023 application is processed. Once the 2022-2023 applications are processed, that eligibility determination carries through the school year or until another application is processed. After October 12, 2022, all students without a current year approved meal application will default to full paid status.

Elementary school menus are available at: [www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/foodserv/](http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/foodserv/). The menu for the first week of school can be found later in this packet.

Under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, a student may be entitled to receive menu substitutions or texture modifications under the school lunch program. This entitlement occurs when a doctor determines that a child has a disability which limits one or more major life activities. A signed statement from the student’s doctor must verify the existence of the student’s disabling condition and an indication that the disability restricts the student’s diet. If the disability prevents the student from eating regular school meals, the doctor must indicate the substitution that should be provided to the child. If you believe your child needs substitutions because of a disability, please contact the school office.

**Important Policy Updates**

Please note the following important updates:

**Birthday Celebrations:** We will continue to acknowledge birthdays monthly and our school leadership team has created a special way to celebrate! This year we will not have individual birthday celebrations in the classroom. We will celebrate student birthdays monthly with a “birthday bingo” party in the cafeteria. All students celebrating that month will come together with Mrs. Houston and Mrs. Musser to play bingo and receive a few non-edible birthday treats. Parents will not need to send anything in for this celebration.
Communication Devices: The policy regarding communication devices on school property has changed for the coming school year. **While students are still permitted to have these devices on campus, they are to be off and stored in student backpacks during the school day.** Please consider sending your child with a communication device (cell phone, smart watches, etc.) ONLY if absolutely necessary. Note that these devices are entirely the responsibility of the student and the school will not be responsible for these items. For further information, please see MCPS regulation COG-RA.

Visitor Policy

Per MCPS regulation ABA-RB, all visitors during the student day are required to sign in and out of the building.

Upon entering the school, please go directly to the office and sign in using a current photo ID (preferably a driver’s license). You will be issued a visitor’s sticker that is to be worn during your visit. Please stop by the office as you exit to sign out.

**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A GOVERNMENT ISSUED PHOTO ID, YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED BEYOND THE FRONT OFFICE.**

In order to maintain a quiet environment for learning, unenrolled children under the age of 18 are not permitted beyond the school office during the school day.

Arrival Information

Students who walk east from Cumberland or through the small alleyway (Warwick Place extended) should enter the building through the main front doors and proceed down the main steps to the lower level, where they will either go to outside line-up or indoor line-up according to established procedures.

Students who ride their bikes to school are to lock their bikes up on the bike rack located at the south end of our building. Please be sure to provide your child with a chain and lock that he/she can use easily. It is recommended that all bikes be locked at all times. If your child uses a scooter to come to school, **it must be folded and carried once on school property.** If your child uses roller blades to get to school he/she must remove them prior to entering the school building. Use of a bike/scooter/roller blade helmet is mandatory by Maryland law.

The parking lot (entrance on Deal Place) is for **staff parking only** and will **NOT** be accessible for non-staff parking or drop-off. All unauthorized vehicles will be towed at the owner’s expense. There will be a patrol stationed at the driveway; however, there will not be adult supervision for students if they enter or leave by the rear entrance to the building. Parents, **PLEASE do not drop your children off at the rear entrance.** All students and their parents are to use the front entrances located on Warwick Place. There will be a crossing guard located at the intersection of Dorset Avenue and Warwick Place. If you are driving your child to school, please drop him or her off on Warwick at the **south driveway entrance** to the school (bottom of the bus loop), so your child(ren) can use the sidewalk to enter the building. Students should be ready to exit vehicles quickly from the passenger side of your vehicle as our buses need to be able to easily access the bus loop.
Walkers and students driven by their parents should arrive between 8:40 a.m. – 8:50 a.m. to ensure that they are on their way to their classrooms when the first bell rings at 8:55 a.m. There is no supervision for students prior to 8:40 a.m. and other than those who attend the Bar-T Before-School program; students are not permitted to be in the building prior to 8:40 a.m., including morning helpers. Students who walk north on Warwick and students who are driven by their parents must enter the building using the south front entrance and proceed to the designated areas listed above.

Students purchasing breakfast should go directly to the cafeteria at 8:40 a.m.

Dismissal Information

Students who attend Bar-T After Care will be dismissed first. Kindergarten walkers will be dismissed second out the front south doors. First – fifth grade walkers will follow and will be called to exit the building in the following manner: Students who walk west on Cumberland or who turn north into the small alleyway will exit through the main front doors. Students meeting parents or walking south on Warwick will exit through the south front door. Kindergarten bus riders will be escorted by a patrol or their teacher to the front hallway to wait for their bus. Bus riders in grades one through five will be called by bus color and will leave for their buses using the main front doors.

Because preparation for dismissal is a busy time in the classrooms and the office, we would like to minimize distractions between 3:00-3:25. If you must pick up your child prior to the regular dismissal time of 3:25 p.m., please come to the office BEFORE 3:00 to sign-out your child.

If your family has an emergency change in dismissal plans, please email your child’s teacher. If you become aware of the change after 12:00 p.m., please call the office in addition to emailing your child’s teacher so that we can be sure that your child receives the message because we cannot guarantee your child getting messages during dismissal. We are unable to accept dismissal changes after 3:00 p.m.

Please note the attached bus schedule, as there have been changes from last year. It is important that students stay seated, talk in soft voices, and be cooperative with the patrols and bus drivers. We will be reviewing bus expectations during the first day of school. Patrols are assigned to buses to help maintain order. The patrols are only 5th graders and need to have the cooperation of the students. Parents are responsible to monitor behavior at the bus stops. If you have any concerns about bus behavior, please call either Ms. Tulchinsky-Cohen (Ms. T-C) or Ms. Janine Golando, patrol sponsor, at 240-740-1100. Any questions about buses, schedules, and general transportation topics should be directed to Mr. Carranza Ayala at the Bethesda transportation depot at 240-740-6580. Please help your child remember his/her bus color. Students will receive a colored bracelet representing the color of their departure (bus, walkers, car riders, Bar-T) on the first day of school. We would appreciate your assistance in encouraging your child to wear his/her bracelet the first two weeks of school. Students may not ride buses other than the bus to which they are regularly assigned without a written request from the parent. Written requests for exceptions to this rule must be submitted to your child’s classroom teacher for approval upon arrival to school. We can relay messages to your child and interrupt classroom instruction only in the case of an emergency. Please also be sure to note the BUS COLORS for your child’s bus—they may be different routes in the morning and afternoon. We will be using the PM route colors during the afternoon announcements. Please be sure your child has learned the afternoon bus color by the first day of school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do I get home?</th>
<th>Bracelet Color</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bar-T Child Care</td>
<td>Rainbow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walkers/ Car Riders</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Bus (1106)</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Bus (1113)</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Bus (1123)</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange Bus (1127)</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We understand that dismissal plans may change in the event that school is unexpectedly closed early. So there is no confusion, please be sure to complete the early dismissal form found later in the packet and return it to your child's teacher as soon as possible.

**Attendance**

As mandated by the Maryland State Department of Education, attendance will be recorded as follows:

- A student is counted present for a full day if a student is in attendance four hours or more of the school day. A student is counted present for ½ day if in attendance for at least two hours of the school day, but less than four hours.

- Students will be recorded as a.m. absent, if they arrive at school more than two hours late.
- Students will be recorded as p.m. absent, if they leave school more than two hours early.
- Students will be recorded as either a.m. absent or p.m. absent, if they are absent from school for more than two hours, but less than four hours during the school day.
- Students will be recorded as full-day absent, if they are present for less than two hours of the school day.
- Students will be recorded as full-day present, if they are present for more than four hours of the school day.

If you do not inform us by phone on the day of your child's absence, you will receive an automated voice mail message informing you of your child's unexcused absence from school. If your child is absent for any reason, please call the school office (240-740-1100) by 9:15 A.M. A written note must be sent to the teacher when he/she returns to school. We don't require a note if the parent calls school.

Please remember that it is essential for your child to be at school. Please try to schedule your vacations or family activities when school is not in session. I realize that sometimes vacation opportunities come up unexpectedly; however, these absences are considered unlawful and the absence(s) will be recorded as unexcused. Students learn when they are in school; please support us by making sure your child comes to school and comes to school on time. Should your child have three or more unexcused absences or tardies in one month, I will be sending you a letter noting this information. If your child arrives after 9:00 a.m., PLEASE be sure to sign your child in at the school office.

**Enrollment**

As of August 11, our enrollment is at 340 students and continues to fluctuate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As these tight budget times continue, we appreciate the funding and support the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has received from the County Council. We recognize that it is imperative to use our resources in the most efficient and effective manner. MCPS staffing allocations are based on projected enrollment. In some cases, it may become necessary for staffing changes to occur in schools if enrollment comes in below projection and doesn’t justify the staffing that was allocated. If there is a need to make an adjustment in staffing based on actual enrollment, we will do our best to minimize the impact of these necessary adjustments. We will keep you informed and alert you of any changes that may occur at our school.

Student Placement
A great deal of planning has gone into grouping students for instruction. All returned profile sheets, letters, and personal conferences providing information about your child were read and considered prior to placing children in classes. We have a capable and caring staff, who will work with you to meet the social, emotional, and academic needs of your child.

Teachers will reach out to their new students via email or phone on August 25. To welcome students to their new classes. Class lists will not be posted this year.

If for some reason you have not heard from your child’s teacher by the morning of Friday, August 26, you can call the main office that afternoon between 12:00–3:30 for your child’s teacher assignment. Alternatively, you can email Mrs. Houston (Cynthia_A_Houston@mcpsmd.org) or Ms. Tulchinsky-Cohen (Karin_L_Tulchinsky-Cohen@mcpsmd.org) that weekend and either administrator will let you know your child’s class. All class lists are final, please do not ask to change your child’s class placement.

Mandated Notifications
MCPS requires that certain notices and forms be shared with parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year. That information can be found as attachments at the end of this memo or in links on the school webpage.

Health Information
A copy of the Maryland State Immunization guidelines for the 2022-23 school year is attached for your convenience. New students should present proper documentation of required immunizations at the time of enrollment. If a parent/guardian does not provide documentation for the required immunizations but presents evidence of an appointment to obtain documentation or immunizations within 20 calendar days of the date of enrollment, the student may be enrolled. However, if the documentation is not provided immediately following the scheduled date, the student must be excluded from school and marked absent until proof of immunization is received. If you have questions or concerns about these requirements, please contact our School Health Technician, Ms. Teresa Messina at 240-740-1102, on or after August 24, 2022.

To ensure a smooth, lice free opening of school, we are requesting that parents/guardians inspect their children’s heads prior to their return to school and every few weeks thereafter. Should lice be
evident, please notify our School Health Technician. She will be able to provide you with information regarding treatment of a lice infestation. In addition, upon your child’s entry/return to school following an episode of lice, our School Health Technician will need to inspect the student’s head to assure the absence of live lice and nits located within ½ inch of the scalp. If the nits are located ½ inch or more from the scalp, a student may attend school.

Please be sure that you have provided us with up-to-date contact information including phone numbers and email addresses so that the health room or school can reach you directly. Be sure to update information using ParentVue.

Other Information

Notices from non-profit programs will be distributed via backpack twice a year (at the beginning of the first and third academic quarters). Information from our PTA, MCPS, MC government or the MC recreation department will go home throughout the school year. Please look for these each week (ransack your child’s backpack), since they will contain important announcements regarding school events, activities, and many other things you need to know. A comprehensive school year calendar is included in this mailing. The PTA also publishes a school directory with names and addresses of all Somerset families and other information about the school, which will be distributed later in the school year. General information will also be available on our school website.

Remember, teachers will reach out to their new students via email or phone on Thursday, August 25 to welcome students to their new classes. Class lists will not be posted this year.

Do enjoy the rest of your summer. We’re looking forward to seeing you and working with you throughout this school year! Please know that throughout this year, our goal is to work closely with you to ensure that the needs of our children are being met. It is important to keep the lines of communication open between home and school so that together we are able to create an effective learning community for all students at Somerset ES. Please check the accuracy of staff email addresses if you do not receive a response to an email in a timely manner. Thank you for your support and cooperation as we work together to make this a successful year for our children!

School Website

Please visit our webpage for more information from our administration, staff, grade-level newsletters/websites, and PTA: http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/somersetes/

Sincerely,
Cynthia Houston
Acting Principal

Enclosures:
- Staff List
- Supply List/Information
- Cafeteria Information
- Immunization Guidelines/Clinic Information
- MCPS School Year Calendar
- Bus Letter and Schedule (by COLOR)
- Early Dismissal Form
- Bar-T Before and After Care Information
Calendar for August-October 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 17</td>
<td>Kindergarten Orientation 10:00 a.m.-12:05 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 23</td>
<td>Popsicles with the Principal 3:30-4:15 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 25</td>
<td>Teacher Welcome E-Mails/Phone Calls to Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 26</td>
<td>New Family Parent Meeting 9:30-10:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 26</td>
<td>Sneak Peek 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 28</td>
<td>PTA Play Date for New Families @ Norwood Park 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 29</td>
<td>School Begins!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 29</td>
<td>PTA Welcome Back Coffee – 9:00-10:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 5</td>
<td>No School, Labor Day Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 7</td>
<td>Back to School Night, Grades K-2 6:30-8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 12</td>
<td>Back to School Night, Grades 3-5 6:30-8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 14</td>
<td>Early Release Day – 12:55 p.m. Dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 23</td>
<td>PTA Movie Night 5:00-7:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 26</td>
<td>No School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 30</td>
<td>Early Release Day – 12:55 p.m. Dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 5</td>
<td>No School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 10</td>
<td>Columbus Day – Open House 9:00-11:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 12</td>
<td>Individual Fall Portraits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>PTA General Membership Meeting 6:30-8:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>Professional Day, No School for Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 31</td>
<td>Fall Festival: Kids Parade and Class Celebrations 1:45 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Kindergarten Only:

On the first day of school Kindergarten students should line up outside on the blacktop near their teacher. Each teacher will be holding a placard with their name on it, so you can find them easily. If you are accompanying your child to school, please say good-bye outside and allow your child to enter the building unaccompanied. We will have staff readily available to escort the children to the correct location. This makes the transition for the children so much easier. We promise to take good care of them on the first day and for the rest of the school year.

We would like to emphasize that the Kindergarten year is a very special one during which time many of the attitudes toward school and learning begin to take shape. In addition to learning the Kindergarten objectives, we want our students to feel happy and positive about themselves and their school experiences. The Kindergarten instructional program deals with child development in the areas of language and thinking skills, concepts in math, science, social studies, art, and music, as well as social, emotional and physical development.
Bus students will be picked up at the bus stop closest to your home. A copy of the bus schedule for our school is enclosed for your reference. Kindergarten students who are bus riders will ride the regular school bus at the beginning and end of the school day.

Please review the enclosed bus schedule and note the COLOR of the bus your child rides. All bus students will need to know this information for dismissal.

Please remember to join us for our Kindergarten Orientation on Wednesday, August 17, 2022. This is an opportunity for our Kindergarten Families to meet the teachers, Ms. Davidov and Ms. Joyce.

Kindergarten students will:
- Meet new friends
- Visit the classrooms
- Participate in an activity

Parents will:
- Meet school staff
- Learn important information for this upcoming year
- Have an opportunity to ask questions

We will have two sessions:

- The first session will be from 10:00 – 11:00 for families with the last name beginning with A-L.
- The second session will be from 11:05 – 12:05 for families with the last name beginning with M-Z.

Families should enter through the South Door at the bottom of the bus loop in front of the school.