



TAKOMA PARK MIDDLE SCHOOL

7611 Piney Branch Road • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

PHONE: 240-740-5220 • FAX: 301-650-6430

August 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

I hope that you are having a safe and enjoyable summer filled with wonderful memories and time with family and friends. This summer I have enjoyed meeting our incoming sixth grade Takoma families, hiring new staff, hosting Takoma ES and Piney Branch ES for summer school, and preparing for the school year. Our Building Services Team and Instruction Council have been working hard to prepare the program and facilities for the upcoming school year and we are ready to welcome over 1108 students for an exciting year of academics and enrichment!

Our vision at TPMS is to: “serve a diverse community where committed and talented staff, students, families and community members work together so students can learn, rise above challenges, reach their goals, and become productive members of a changing society.” In alignment with the MCPS strategic plan, we are focusing on Academic Excellence, Well-Being and Family Engagement, and Professional and Operational Excellence. Simply stated, “Excellence for All!”

Our success is owed to the combined efforts of all members of the TPMS community and we are committed to making TPMS an even better place to learn and grow in 2022-2023!

Our student summer mailing information follows this letter and will be posted electronically on our Takoma Park Middle School (TPMS) website: <http://www.tpmsweb.com> under the heading “Summer Community Letter.” Please visit our website, read all of the information carefully and send any requested forms back to school with your students by September 9th. If you would like a paper copy, please stop by and our main office staff will gladly give one to you.

This letter outlines information you need to know for the upcoming year, including methods of communication, new staff members, and other important information prior to the start of school. Three key upcoming events and dates are listed below. Stay tuned for more details.

- Student Orientation: August 25, 2022 (6th, 7th, and new 8th grade students) from 8:15am - 12:00pm
- First Day of School: August 29, 2022 (Schedules will be available in ParentVue and StudentVue the week of August 22nd.)
- Grade 6 Outdoor Family Social: September 1, 2022 (6th grade families) 5:00 - 7:00pm
- Back-to-School Night (All Grades): September 8, 2022 from 6:30-8:30pm

I look forward to spending the upcoming school year working with you and our students to achieve excellence in academics and character!

Sincerely,

Erin L. Martin
Principal

Key Staff

Administrative Leadership:

Mrs. Erin L. Martin – Principal
 Mr. Aaron Williams – Assistant Principal (6th grade)
 Mr. Gary Einhorn – Magnet Coordinator (7th grade)
 Ms. Carlyn Patterson-Breese – Assistant Principal (8th grade)

Ms. Megan Litten – Resource Counselor

Team Leaders:

<u>Grade 6</u>	<u>Grade 7</u>	<u>Grade 8</u>
Roy Lynn	Lara Finklea	Maude Windsor
Brian Baker	Joseph Evans	Javier Valera

Resource Teachers:

Julia Todhunter, English Lara Finklea, World Languages Javier Valera, Math Brian Baker, PE/Arts Rebecca Epling, Science	Jocelyn Watson, Special Education Deirdre Lett, World Studies Maude Windsor, ESOL Jessica Phelan, Media Specialist
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Counselors:

<u>Sixth Grade</u>	<u>Eighth Grade</u>
Pam Lever	Laurie Steinberg
<u>Seventh Grade</u>	<u>ESOL</u>
Kate Hankins (Last Names A-G) Carmen Martinez (Last Names H-Z)	Carmen Martinez (Grades 6-8)

IEP

Megan Litten (Grades 6-8)

*Please visit the [counseling webpage](#) to access student and family resources.

New Staff

Please welcome to our school the following new staff members:

Aaron J. Williams	Assistant Principal		Katherine Lariviere	Math
Bedilu Gedle	Building Service		Amali Panakure	Math
Kimberly Prudencio	Building Service		Javier Valera	Math Resource Teacher
Ting Chen	Cafeteria		Laurie Steinberg	School Counselor
Gary Booker	Computer Technology		Jessica Parker	Science
Victoria Moten	English		Joshua Burton	Social Studies
			Susan Kelly	Special Education

*To view the entire staff directory, please visit the Takoma Park MS website:
<https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/takomaparkms/staff/directory/>

If there is a need to make an adjustment in staffing based on enrollment, we will do our best to minimize the impact of these necessary adjustments and inform you of any needed changes.

In addition, student schedules may be altered early in the year to respond to any staffing allocation changes described above, to balance class sizes and to respond to student needs.

General School Information

Main Office telephone: 240-740-5220
Counseling Office telephone: 240-740-5230
Magnet Program telephone: 240-740-5242
FAX: 301-650-6430
website: <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/takomaparkms/>

The school day for students is from 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It is imperative that students not be dropped off prior to 7:55 a.m. Additionally, students must be picked up from after-school activities **by 4:15 p.m.** as supervision is not scheduled outside of these hours. If you have questions about events, schedules or other school-related matters, including reporting the absence of a student, please call us at 240-740-5220. If you need to report an absence and would like to submit a letter via email, please send an email to our attendance secretary.

Communication

The primary means of communicating school information is through the weekly principal's newsletter and our school website (listed above). The principal's newsletter is scheduled for each Sunday evening during the school year to provide important school information and upcoming events. As always, you are encouraged to call the school to speak to your child's teacher, counselor or grade-level administrator when you have questions or concerns.

**** If you are not receiving the Principal's Newsletter on Sundays, please contact the school.**

myMCPS ParentVue and StudentVue

MyMCPS Portal is a valuable resource for educators, parents and students. It creates a bridge of communication to relay important information such as homework, tests, upcoming events and grades. At Takoma Park MS, teachers are encouraged to update their myMCPS Portal pages daily. It is important for students and parents to check their myMCPS Portal regularly to keep track of assignments and grades. However, grades may take longer to post depending on the assignment. Please be patient with teachers as some assignments may take as long as two weeks to grade.

If you need assistance with setting up your account, please email us. Information is also available on the [MCPS website](#).

6th-8th Grade Orientation

On August 25, 2022, TPMS will host a Student Orientation from 8:15a.m. -12:00p.m for all students in grades 6 and ***new*** 7th and 8th grade students. School buses will be running to pick up and drop off students. Please see the bus schedules** to find your route. Bus routes for the Magnet Program will be posted on our website at a later date.

**Bus Schedules

We expect to receive all 2022-2023 bus route information for local and magnet bus routes the week of 8/15. At that time, you may go to our school website and click on [Bus Routes](#) to view the updated information. Another helpful transportation resource to bookmark is the [Department of Transportation](#) page on the MCPS website.

First Day of School

On the first day of school, Monday, August 29, 2022, the buses will follow the schedule included with this document; upon arrival at school, students will report as follows:

- **6th grade students** to homeroom (*if student did not attend orientation, report to **media center***)
- **7th grade students** to cafeteria
- **8th grade students** to the gym

Cafeteria

For the 2022-2023 school year, Montgomery County Public Schools will no longer make breakfast, lunch, and dinner free for all students. Starting on the first day of school, full breakfasts will cost \$1.30, full lunches will cost \$2.80, and various ala carte items will be available ranging from 1 to 2 dollars.

When students go through the meal line, they will enter their student ID numbers to access their lunch accounts. Funds can be added to student lunch accounts using [MySchoolBucks](#) or payments can be made directly to our cafeteria using cash or a check. We will share a link to the monthly menu and specific ala carte offerings during the third week of August, 2021.

No student will be denied a meal if funds are not available on their account. In the event that a lunch account has insufficient funds, the student will still receive the meal and the price will be recorded as a credit which can be repaid at a later date.

This year, more than any other, it is important to complete the Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) form if you have previously, or believe you will qualify for free or reduced meals. **If your family qualifies for any level of FARMS support, all meals are free.** Apply online at www.MySchoolApps.com.

School Supply List

Please use the link to access the Takoma Park MS suggested [School Supply List](#) for the 2022-2023 school year.

Physical Education

Students are expected to change and dress appropriately for physical education. We do not require a particular uniform or color pattern, however, it's important for students to be able to move in a safe manner. Students have a personal locker to store extra clothing and hygiene items for class. They will keep the same locker until they depart TPMS. Students are not allowed to participate in physical education if their clothing jeopardizes their safety. Take a second to read the [Takoma Park Physical Education Handout](#) for important information about curriculum and after school athletics.

Emergency/Safety and Security Information

Parents should use their ParentVue portal to update their student's emergency information online. You may [click here](#) to view the ParentVue Guide (*Student Information: How do I see student information?*) for directions on how to do so. This is the best way to update your student's information. However, if you cannot provide this information electronically, students are given student specific pre-printed copies of these forms as well as other important forms (see complete list of forms at the end of this letter) during the first weeks of school and are asked to take them home to be reviewed and completed by a parent or guardian. Please update all family contact information as this is our only means to contact family members in the event of an emergency. This information is not shared outside of the school system. It is essential that each form be updated and **returned** to the student's 1st period teacher **by Friday, September 9th**.

Please note that students will only be released to the parent/guardian and emergency contact person(s) identified on the Student Emergency Information form.

TPMS staff and students practice fire evacuation and emergency drills regularly. The school's safety and crisis preparedness plan is based on a national model and is supported by central office safety and security staff. The school's On-Site Emergency Team (OSET) is comprised of administrators, counselors, health room staff, teachers, building service personnel and other staff members. The team meets regularly to ensure the safety of the school building and our ability to respond to potential safety concerns and/or emergencies.

Our school has 40+ security cameras in public areas of the building. There are no cameras in classrooms, restrooms or locker rooms. Security cameras provide critical information should security issues or emergencies occur.

In the event of a school emergency, the school or school system will contact parents/guardians through public service announcements and through the use of the Connect-Ed phone message system. (Please make sure that phone numbers and emails are kept up to date.) As we respond to any emergency, our first priority is the safety of all staff and students on our campus. Driveways and parking lot access must be available for emergency response teams and their vehicles, and may be blocked for any other access. If you need to come to the school, please remember to follow the directions of emergency and/or school staff. Parent reunification sites will be set up in the **media center** and **cafeteria**. Any parent or adult picking up students must have a valid form of identification and the name of the authorized adult must be on the student's emergency information form. Students will not be released to anyone other than those documented on this form.

Supporting our School

There are a variety of ways that community members can support our school. This year, funds raised will be allocated for student recognition, staff appreciation, and professional learning. Families can support these three initiatives in the following ways:

- Our [TPMS Community Spiritwear Store](#) is open now! A great way to show your school pride and support our school community is to shop our store.
- Download the [BoxTops for Education](#) app, scan your food shopping receipts, and earn money for the school.
- Donate used clothing and shoes in the *Clothing to Cash* bin in the far corner of the parking lot.

Student Service Learning (SSL)

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) students working toward a Maryland High School Diploma are required to complete 75 student service learning (SSL) hours in addition to other graduation requirements. Students may earn SSL hours beginning the summer after grade 5 and continue to accrue hours through high school. SSL hours are also awarded to middle school students who successfully pass grade 6 science, grade 7 English, and grade 8 social studies and complete all SSL activities included in these courses. Hours may be earned in school-sponsored clubs and organizations that have a service focus and through involvement with pre-approved, official nonprofit tax exempt organizations in unpaid activities that address needs in the greater community. MCPS is highly aware of the potential for growth that can occur for students involved in the preparation, action, and reflection phases of quality SSL experiences.

The SSL hours earned while enrolled in an MCPS middle school accompany the student to high school. The SSL record of Julius West Middle School students will be maintained by Ms. Debbie Sita, SSL coordinator. Progress toward this diploma requirement is reflected on quarterly report cards and in the MCPS Parent Portal. Students and parents should monitor this record and keep copies of all SSL documents. Documentation of any school year or summer service for which SSL hours are desired can be turned into Ms. Sita through email at Deborah_L_Sita@mcpsmd.org or may be turned into the Takoma Park Main Office. Further SSL information is available at the MCPS [Student Service Learning](#) website. All necessary SSL forms can be found on the homepage of the [Student Service Learning](#) website. The Superintendent's SSL Award will be given to students who meet the high school graduation requirements by the 1st Friday in April (April 7, 2023) of a middle school year. Support your child's involvement in meeting this graduation requirement by helping them choose meaningful service-learning opportunities, follow program guidelines, and keep accurate records of participation. To find SSL opportunities in the community, both virtual and in-person, visit www.montgomeryserves.org and search for opportunities marked as MCPS SSL with the graduation cap icon.

Extracurricular Activities

In the fall, students will receive a packet describing extracurricular activities. Most extracurricular activities begin at the end of the school day and end at 4:15 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays. Using a pass from the activity sponsor, students may ride the activity bus home. The activity buses leave school at approximately 4:25 p.m.

A Message from the Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA)

Getting Ready for a Great Year at TPMS Together!

After two years of limited involvement in our school due to the pandemic, this year's TPMS PTA Board is excited to join Principal Martin to reinvigorate our school, support our amazing teachers and staff, and aid student-led initiatives. As your new PTA leaders (listed below), we aim to communicate clearly, bridge communication between parents and school leadership, and foster a happy, healthy, and accessible experience for the student and family community. Our mission for the coming year is to increase parent involvement to enrich and engage our diverse community and return to many of the rewarding in-person activities we used to do.

Please fill out this [Parent Survey & Volunteer Signup](#) to help us learn more about your priorities and experience with the PTA, including the events that most interest you and your family for the coming year. The survey is being provided in English, Spanish, Amharic, Chinese, French, Bengali, Hindi, and Ukrainian. Click on the link to pick your preferred language.

We are also challenging each family to commit to give their time and resources to help strengthen our community. Last year, we saw the power that a small group of parent volunteers brought to help shift students' experience at lunchtime. Imagine what we could do if every family were willing to volunteer or offer financial support in the coming year? What can you do to help us make this year at TPMS even better for our students and community?

Let us know by completing this survey by August 15! Stay tuned to Principal Martin's newsletter for more updates and events in the new PTA Corner this year.

Wishing you a great rest of summer and looking forward to seeing you at the first PTA meeting on September 13!

TPMS PTA Board:

- President: Clare Seelke
- Vice-President, Fundraising: Florence Jarfoi
- Vice-President Membership/Volunteer Engagement: Alice Weiss
- Corresponding Secretary: Vacant
- Recording Secretary: Diana McCown
- Treasurer: Greg Swaluk
- NAACP Representative: Gladys Chi
- MCCPTA delegate: Susan Bailey

TPMS Parent Survey & Volunteer Signup: [2022-23 Parent Surveys and Volunteer Sign-up](#)

School Calendar Links

The following are the website links to the MCPS School Calendars for the 2022-2023 school year:

[Montgomery County Public School Calendar](#)

[Takoma Park Middle School Calendar](#): *This is a live link to the school's master calendar. Throughout the summer and into the school year, we will continue to update.*

Important Student Information Forms

Parents/Guardians may complete these forms through their ParentVue portal or click on the links below to complete and return copies to their student's 1st period teacher **by Friday, September 9th.**

[Annual Notice for Directory Information and Student Privacy](#) (English)

[Notificación Anual de Información del Directorio y Privacidad del Estudiante](#) (Spanish)

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[Notification annuelle concernant les informations de l'annuaire et la protection de la vie privée de l'élève](#) (French)

[Notification of Rights Under the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment \(PPRA\)](#) (English)

[Notificación de Derechos bajo la Enmienda de Protección de los Derechos del Estudiante](#) (Spanish)

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[Notification des Droits Sous la Protection de l'Amendement des Droits des Élèves](#) (French)