



This Week

Mon., Sept. 14 **Rosh Hashanah, NO SCHOOL FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**
Tue., Sept. 15 **Welcome back!**
Wed., Sept. 16 **Odyssey of the Mind Parent Info Meeting, 7:30 pm, APR**
Thur., Sept. 17 **Art Escapades, 3:50-5:00 PM, RM. 163**
 Back to School Picnic, 6:00-8:00 pm
Fri., Sept. 18 **Wear your school colors today**
 Have a great weekend!

A Look Ahead

Wed., Sept. 23 **Yom Kippur, NO SCHOOL FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS**

- **A gentle reminder that our three handicap parking spaces are clearly marked and restricted to cars that display a handicap placard or plate.** In Maryland violation of the parking restriction could result in a fine of up to \$500. Please don't block access to the spaces for quick errands into school. We have disabled visitors/parents who rely on reserved handicap parking.
- **If you haven't already done so, please complete and return the WHITE Student Emergency Information form and the BLUE Authorization to Release form that were sent home in backpacks. Although they may seem redundant, they are needed for different purposes. In the event of an emergency, it is essential that we have your child's current information on file.**
- **All students brought home the Bells Mill Discipline Policy. Please review this packet with your child, sign and return the tear-off portion on the front page. Keep the packet for your information.**
- **The Back to School Picnic is Thursday, September 17, 6:00-8:00 pm.** Please come, bring a blanket, catch up with old friends and make new ones! Food will be for sale from various vendors.
- **Please consider joining the PTA.** They offer many events throughout the school year that support the school and the school community. The PTA provides cultural arts assemblies, enrichment activities, guest speakers, and staff appreciation just to name a few. Visit the PTA website to find out how to join <http://bellsmill.org/>.
- **All students in the Churchill HS cluster are invited to the Churchill vs. Blair varsity football game, Friday, September 25, 6:30 pm kickoff at Churchill's stadium.** Admission is **FREE** for elementary and middle school students. The concession stand will be open for dinner. Questions, email Elaine Arndt elaineharndt@gmail.com. See you at the game!

- **The Board of Education has tentatively approved revisions to Policy IKA—Grading and Reporting.** The Board also has endorsed the interim superintendent of schools’ plan to replace two-hour semester final exams in high school courses with quarterly marking period assessments. This would require a change to the way that final semester grades are calculated for high school courses and parents, students, and staff are asked to provide feedback on four different grading options. To provide feedback on the policy and grading options, visit the MCPS website at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org, search “assessment strategy.” Feedback is due by October 19.
- **The Board also has tentatively approved Policy IDA—School Year Calendar.** This is a new policy that will guide procedures to develop, adopt, and disseminate a school year calendar. Policy IDA will ensure that the MCPS calendar meets the educational and operational needs of the district and complies with all relevant state and federal laws. To learn more about Policy IDA and provide feedback, visit the MCPS website and search “policies”. Comments are due by October 9.
- **MCPS has launched a new, user-friendly online calendar tool for families.** The tool is customizable and users can “build their own calendar” based on select categories and what interests them most. The calendar can be displayed by month or up to 12 months at a time. Users can choose to see the days that schools are open and closed, Board of Education meeting information, fine arts events, cultural and religious holidays, and more, such as Parent Academy workshops. The calendar can be viewed as a list or in a calendar template; it can also be printed or downloaded to a computer or mobile device in iCal format. Access it from the MCPS home page or at <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/calendar/>.
- **MCPS has developed a new guide that answers many of the frequently asked questions about the accommodation of students’ religious beliefs and practices in school and during school-sponsored activities.** The publication, *Guidelines for Respecting Religious Diversity*, was developed in collaboration with the Montgomery County Executive’s Faith Community Working Group and other stakeholders to provide clear information for students, families, staff, and the community. MCPS is committed to promoting respect and appreciation for the religions, beliefs, and customs of its diverse student population. The publication has been translated in eight languages—Spanish, Chinese, French, Vietnamese, Korean, Amharic, Farsi, and Arabic, and is available at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/religiousdiversity/.
- **MCPS has launched new multimedia tools that will enable Spanish-speaking families to more easily engage with schools and the district.** The new resources include a redesigned website; a mobile app; and a Facebook page, all in Spanish. The redesigned website features new content as well as an expanded amount of information that had previously been available only in English. A new series of videos—Consejos para Padres—provides helpful tips for parents delivered by Spanish-speaking MCPS staff members. Other video highlights include Momentos Informativos, which provide news and information about MCPS, and Guia para Padres, videos that help parents understand and navigate the school system. The videos will be available on the website and on MCPS TV, as well as on social media sites, including YouTube, the MCPSEspanol Twitter feed, and the new Spanish Facebook page (www.facebook.com/mcpsespanol). The videos also will be available on the new Spanish mobile app, which can be downloaded from the Apple store and Google Play. For more information, visit www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/es/.
- **Fortaleciendo las Comunicaciones con las Familias Hispanohablantes**
MCPS ha puesto en marcha nuevas herramientas de multimedia que permitirán a las familias de habla hispana participar con mayor facilidad en las escuelas y el distrito. Los nuevos recursos incluyen un sitio rediseñado de internet; una aplicación móvil; y una página de Facebook, todo en español. El sitio rediseñado de internet cuenta con nuevos contenidos, así como una cantidad amplia de información que había estado previamente disponible sólo en inglés. Una nueva serie de vídeos-Consejos Para Padres-proporcionan consejos útiles para los padres de parte de los miembros del personal de MCPS que hablan español. Otros puntos destacados en video incluyen Momentos Informativos, que proporcionan noticias e información de

MCPS y Guía Para los Padres, videos que ayudan a los padres a entender y a navegar el sistema escolar. Los videos estarán disponibles en la página de internet y en MCPS TV, así como en los sitios de medios sociales, como YouTube, Twitter de MCPSEspanol, y la nueva [página de Facebook en español](#). Los videos también estarán disponibles en la nueva aplicación móvil en español, que se puede descargar desde su Apple Store y Google Play.

Para más información, ingrese a <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/es/>.

- **MCPS QuickNotes is a free e-mail service that provides subscribers with important news and information about MCPS programs and activities, plus emergency information.** *MCPS QuickNotes* is offered in seven languages: English, Spanish, French, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Amharic. Visit www.mcpsquicknotes.org to subscribe.
- **MCPS offers a free, half-day prekindergarten program in schools throughout the county for income-eligible families.** This program gives children the skills and knowledge they need to be ready for kindergarten. Spaces are still available for the 2015-2016 program. Children must be 4 years old and families must be income-eligible to apply. Prekindergarten students attend daily classes Monday through Friday, in the morning or afternoon. Enroll your child today! Call 301-230-0676 to begin the enrollment process.
- **The MCPS Parent Academy is back with an exciting lineup of free workshops for parents.** The 2015 fall session is under way and includes sessions on choosing the right college, teen substance abuse, religious diversity, special education, cybersafety, and more. All workshops are free and are held at schools and locations throughout Montgomery County. The schedule of workshops is available at www.mcpsparentacademy.org.
- ***Attention Gr. 1-5: There will be a Parent Information Meeting for those interested in learning about the BMES Odyssey of the Mind program on Wednesday evening, September 16 from 7:30-8:30 in the APR.*** Odyssey of the Mind demonstrates that creativity can be taught, stimulated and improved with practice. Students use their artistic, theatrical and engineering skills to create new solutions to intriguing problems; they learn to "think outside the box" and develop valuable skills that will be essential for success in the 21st Century. Bells Mill has a robust Odyssey of the Mind (OotM) program: last year we sent nine teams to the Maryland State Finals and two of these were invited to the World Finals in Michigan. Teams of students meet weekly from Fall to mid-Spring under the supervision of trained parent coaches. Cost is minimal, but parent assistance is required given that OotM is an entirely volunteer program. We need coaches to lead teams and volunteers to help support the teams, with ample guidance from the OotM program. Most meetings will be held on Friday afternoons at BMES. The BMES OotM program is directed by Dominic and Trudi Benford, Bells Mill parents in their fifth year leading OotM who successfully coached a fourth grade team to World Finals last year. ***This mandatory informational meeting for interested parents/guardians will introduce the program to new families and orient returning ones. There is no need for students to attend.***

Thank you for being partners in your child's education

