



School Talk

WEEKLY UPDATE!

February 26, 2021

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Did You Know? Parents - you must remain at the [bus stop](#) or at [school](#) until your child passes the health screening. To expedite the process, be sure to complete the [online screening process](#) prior to arriving to the bus stop or school.

[APS Celebrates Black History Month](#)

Throughout the month of February, APS will celebrate **Black History Month**. The focus of this year is Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and the paramount role these institutions play in educating the African American community. Each week will have a theme related to this year's focus.

This week's theme is: **APS Students Who Are HBCU Graduates**. As Black History Month comes to a close, we celebrate the APS student alumni who have decided to attend an HBCU to witness the historical and cultural impact of these historical institutions of higher education for themselves. These students leave behind a great legacy at APS and serve as inspirations for other students who are at the pivotal point in their life when they begin to explore their post-secondary options. Read, in their own words, why they made the choice to attend an HBCU [here](#).

For more about APS' celebration of Black History Month and to listen to a message from Superintendent Dr. Duran, visit [this page](#).

[Class Meet-and-Greets/Asynchronous Monday](#)

At the writing of this newsletter, all students have been transferred to their new teachers. You should have received an e-mail notification of this change prior to today. On **Monday, March 1**, teachers will have a short meet-and-greet with all their students so they can welcome their new students to the class and introduce the classmates to each other. This event is for both virtual and hybrid classes.

Because this is a special day, the asynchronous work assigned will be lighter than usual. This is so that children can enjoy their time getting to know their new teachers and new friends without worrying about having too many assignments to complete that day.

[MPSA Welcomes Our Students Back to School Next Tuesday!](#)

Next week on **Tuesday, March 2nd**, students who chose to participate in the hybrid model will be returning to school! They are the children from **Primary (PreK3, PreK4, Kindergarten) and Lower Elementary (1st, 2nd, 3rd)**. *Upper Elementary hybrid students (4th, 5th) return on Tuesday, March 9th.*

We'd like to remind parents to read the [Health & Safety](#) page and discuss the safety procedures with your child. You are also invited to use this [MPSA Safe Distancing photo album](#) to show your children pictures of some of the safety methods being implemented at school to help them prepare for a return to an environment very different than the one they left last spring. (This photo album has been updated with photos of the various entrances into school.) For more detail about the reopening, please watch the [PTA Principal's Coffee Chat](#) with Ms. Genove. She answers a lot of questions from families and staff in the video.

Masks: A reminder that all students need to wear a mask on the bus and in school. We will be giving each students masks on their first day of school once they get into the classroom.

Breakfast/Lunch: Students may get a breakfast/lunch from the cafeteria if they wish. All meals continue to be free of cost for students. There will only be one lunch choice prepared daily, so we encourage you to look at the APS lunch menu with your child to ensure they like what is being served that day.

Bus Riders: Bus riders will receive their information in ParentVue by Saturday, February 27. Please understand that the bus your child is assigned should be the **ONLY** bus your child tries to ride. Every seat was planned for and your child will be refused a seat if you attempt to have them board at a stop not assigned to them. For more about APS bus procedures, click [here](#).

Car Riders: Cars should line up on **Highland Street** and wait until a staff member comes to your car to do the health screening for your child. **Please do not let them leave the car on their own.** Neither should you get out of the car to help your child get out. If your child needs help unstrapping (or, conversely, being strapped in) or your child is inconsolable, you should park your car and walk your child to the walker entrance on 7th Street. We know this may be an inconvenience but we are prohibited from touching your child so we cannot help like we have done in the past.

Walkers: Walkers will enter the school through on **7th Street**. Follow the large path with the yellow arrows that leads to the double gate by the baseball diamond. Even though we will be outdoors, we ask

that parents and students have their masks on when they line up. Parents, you remain with your children until they pass the health screening.

Parking: Please **DO NOT** park in the car drop off lane and walk your child to the door. Please **DO NOT** double park. Please **DO NOT** block neighborhood driveways. If you will need to strap or unstrap your child from a car seat, we ask that you park somewhere appropriate and walk your child up to the school via the walker entrance on **7th Street**. Do not walk them to the car rider door or the bus rider door.

We understand that some may find the stringency of these steps inconvenient, but please keep in mind that these steps are in place to not only keep your children and the staff safe, but to keep the doors open and children in school. To those who find them unnecessary, we invite you to submit your feedback to engage@apsva.us as MPSA is required to follow all these procedural safeguards as dictated.

MPSA Library Video: New Library Procedures for Hybrid Students

The MPSA Library Team welcomes our hybrid students back into the building. We ask that parents watch this video with their children to learn how students in the hybrid model will be able to get library books. <https://vimeo.com/517190315>

Students remaining in virtual learning will continue to be able to check out books. The books will be in the main entrance vestibule as usual. Please do not come to retrieve a book until you've received a pick up notice from library staff.

Family Life Education Meetings

March 15th, 9:00-10:00 for Parents of 5th Graders: a meeting with Ms. Soliman, school nurse, and Ms. Reeser, school counselor, to share the content of the upcoming FLE lesson on the male and female reproductive systems. There will be time to address your questions. The link to join the meeting will be forthcoming. Parents can choose to have their child opt-out of the lesson.

March 22nd, 10-11:00 and 2-3:00: This is on Monday, an asynchronous learning day. . A link for the lessons will be forthcoming. The lesson on the male and female reproductive systems will be the same at both times. You can choose whatever time works best for your 5th grader's schedule on that day.

Parents of 5th Graders: All Things Middle School

Gunston Montessori: All announcements regarding middle school transition have been and will continue to be posted in Seesaw along with your child's classroom teacher's announcements. Ms. Hernandez posts announcements via email to her parents, so that is how I communicate with the parents of her students.

Gunston Traditional, Williamsburg, Jefferson, Dorothy Hamm, Kenmore: I have and will continue to send you any announcements in individual emails regarding middle school transition.

If your child is **not** going to Gunston Montessori for middle school and you have not informed me by email, please do so, at your earliest convenience: diane.reeser@apsva.us

By now, all fifth-grade students had the opportunity to:

- attend a virtual visit with Gunston Montessori on 2/11 during morning meeting
- attend a Q & A for their school
- view videos and other helpful resources in their Canvas course
- attend a presentation for their individual school the week of 2/15 during morning meeting or during their regularly scheduled SEL lesson.

In the presentation I covered the following: how to access the Canvas course for their middle school, the resources within that school's Canvas course, how to locate the course request form, how to complete the course request form. I also provided time or encouraged students to write their questions for the Q & A middle school meetings and reminded them of the date and time.

It's a lot of information coming at you, at me, and especially at our fifth graders, so let's be understanding of each other and patient with ourselves. Please reach out to me if you have questions about completing the course request form. I am virtually here to help. The course request forms are due by **March 8th**.

Thank you for working together with me on this. Your cooperation saves time and that means I get to meet with more students. YAY!

Diane Reeser, M.A, School Counselor

Upcoming Dates

- Tuesday, March 2 – **First Day for PreK through 3rd Grade Hybrid Students**
- Tuesday, March 9 – **First Day for 4th & 5th Grade Hybrid Students**

Keep in Touch

- MPSA on APS: <https://montessori.apsva.us/>
- MPSA on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MPSArlington>
- MPSA Library on Twitter: https://twitter.com/MPSA_Library
- Principal Genove on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CSGenove>
- Arlington Montessori PTA: <http://acmpta.com/>
- Arlington Montessori Action Committee (AMAC): <http://www.arlingtonmontessori.org/>