



School Talk

WEEKLY UPDATE!

August 25, 2023

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For the first week only – parents may enter the building and walk their children to class. If your child eats breakfast, you may join them. **All parents must leave the building by 8:55AM** as we expect class to begin by 9AM.

The parking lot is reserved for APS employees only, so please come early enough to find street parking and get your child to class on time if you plan on walking them in.

Beginning the 2nd week of school, we ask that families refrain from walking their children to class to get them used to beginning their day upon arrival on their own. We thank you for respecting this decision.

What You Need to Know for the First Day

All of us at MPSA are looking forward to seeing your children this coming **Monday, August 28!**

All PreK4, Kindergartners and 1st through 5th grade students begin on Monday. **PreK3 year old students do not start until September.** Families of PreK3 students should have received their child's start date twice, sent by our registrar, Kia Haynes.

Bus Info: All bus information has been uploaded to **ParentVue**. Go to the "Student Info" tab and scroll down to "Pick Up Information". If you do not see your child's bus information, please do not contact MPSA. If your bus is late, please do not contact MPSA. If you have an issue with your bus stop location,

or the bus driver/assistant, please do not contact MPSA. Contact APS Transportation at transportation@apsva.us or call **703-228-6640** because matters regarding the school bus are outside of our purview.

Drop Off & Pick Up: Children can be dropped off by 8:30AM if they would like to eat breakfast. **If not, we ask that children aren't dropped off until 8:40AM.** All walkers and car riders are to be dropped off at **Door #5** on Highland Street. The entire length of the Highland Street sidewalk will be labeled **NO PARKING** during the hours of **8AM to 9AM** and again **3PM to 4PM**.

- **Walkers** should walk up to the door where they will be greeted by staff.
- **Car riders** should pull up to the curb (with the school on the right side of your car) and unload there. If you need to unbuckle your child from a car seat, we ask that you find street parking (the parking lot is for staff only and towing enforced), unbuckle your child and then walk your child up to the school as to not hold up the flow of the drop off line. We ask you do the same in the afternoon if your child needs to be buckled in.

Pick up is in the same spot for both walkers and car riders. Please follow the same procedures. Dismissal is 3:50PM. Children not picked up by 4:00PM will be taken to the office and parents will be called.

Dismissal: If you are going to make a change to how your child is dismissed for the day, please **call the school** – do not e-mail – to inform us. **703-228-8871**. Please try to call us **before 3PM** so that we may inform everyone of the changes in a timely manner. We ask that parents who want to pick up their children early **please do so by 3:15PM** so as not to run into school dismissal time and so you do not get caught in the bus and car rider line traffic.

Extended Day: Morning Extended Day begins at 7AM. Bring your child to **Door #1** (Main Entrance) and ring the bell. Extended Day staff will buzz you in after confirming your identity. **Afternoon** Extended Day begins directly after dismissal and all children should be picked up by **6PM**. Come to **Door #1** (Main Entrance) to pick up your child in the afternoon, same procedure as morning drop off.

Mark These CLOSED & Early Release Dates on Your Calendar!

Please add these dates to your calendar!

NO SCHOOL Dates – Students do not attend school

- **Friday, September 1 & Monday, September 4:** Labor Day (*Holiday*)
- **Monday, September 25:** Yom Kippur (*Holiday*)
- **Monday, October 9:** Columbus Day Holiday (*Teacher Work Day*)
- **Friday, October 20:** Parent-Teacher Conferences (*Teacher Work Day*)
- **Tuesday, November 7:** Grade Preparation Day (*Teacher Work Day*)
- **Friday, November 10:** Veteran's Day (*Holiday*)
- **Wednesday, November 22 - Friday, November 24:** Fall Break (*Holiday*)
- **Thursday, December 21 – Monday, January 1:** Winter Break (*Holiday*)
- **Monday, January 15:** Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday (*Holiday*)
- **Monday, January 29:** Grade Preparation Day (*Teacher Work Day*)

- **Monday, February 19:** Presidents' Day (*Holiday*)
- **Friday, March 15:** Parent-Teacher Conferences (*Teacher Work Day*)
- **Monday, March 25 - Friday, March 29:** Spring Break (*Holiday*)
- **Wednesday, April 10:** Eid Al Fitr (*Holiday*)
- **Monday, April 15:** Grade Preparation Day (*Teacher Work Day*)
- **Monday, May 27:** Memorial Day (*Holiday*)

Early Release Dates – Students attend in the AM and are released at 1:30PM.

- **Thursday, October 19:** Afternoon Parent-Teacher Conferences
- **Wednesday, December 6:** APS Staff Professional Development
- **Wednesday, February 7:** APS Staff Professional Development
- **Thursday, March 14:** Afternoon Parent-Teacher Conferences
- **Friday, May 3:** APS Staff Professional Development
- **Wednesday, June 5:** Early Release (Teacher Work Afternoon)
- **Wednesday, June 12:** Early Release (*Teacher Work Afternoon*)
- **Friday, June 14:** Early Release – Last Day of School (*Teacher Work Afternoon*)

Attendance at MPSA

School begins at 9AM. Any child who arrives after 9AM will be marked with an unexcused tardy unless they have a valid excuse such as a doctor's appointment or a late bus. **Traffic, music/sports lessons, and oversleeping are all considered unexcused.**

All APS schools have received a directive from the [Office of Student Services](#), under guidance of the [Virginia Department of Education \(VDOE\)](#) to strictly enforce attendance policy this year. So please make note of the following:

Any student not present on their first day of school – regardless of the absent being excused – will be considered a “no show” and withdrawn from school (traditional & choice, from PreK to 12th). Option schools, like Montessori, will hold your spot for 14 days. On the 15th day your spot will be rescinded. To re-enroll your child, you will need to bring your child to MPSA **before 15 days have passed** and meet with the registrar and attendance admin. Students re-enrolling **after** 15 days will have to attend their home school and reapply to Montessori in the next lottery.

Vacations/family travel, except in the case of a death in the family, will be enforced as unexcused.

This includes visiting family, weddings, graduations, etc...If you are seeking special consideration for your family's absence, you will need to make the request in advance of the trip to the principal.

Unexcused absences of 5 or more must be addressed. Excessive unexcused absences of 5 or more – and does not need to be consecutive – will be issued a written warning and referred to the attendance administrator/designee. At the 7th -10th unexcused absence, you will be required to attend an attendance meeting with the administrator and multidisciplinary team (which includes the counselor and/or social worker). **Excessive unexcused tardies** will also be addressed by the multidisciplinary team.

Illness is an excused absence, however, if your child is absent for more than **3** consecutive days for an illness, you may be asked to provide a doctor's note. **All absences for medical/dental appointments require a doctor's note to be excused.**

[Read the attendance policy here.](#)

COVID-19

APS still requires 5 days of quarantine for everyone, students and staff, who test **positive** for COVID-19. However, this will be enforced by the **honor system** as APS will **not** require testing for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms as we've done in the past. Should your child be sent home sick with symptoms, you may request a rapid test from our school's clinic if you wish. Students and staff who test positive will need to remain home 5 days (with the date your child tests positive being day 0) and can return to school on day 6 with a mask until day 10.

[Read the COVID-19 Guidance here.](#)

Like Getting MPSA & APS News? Sign Up for ParentSquare!

Don't ignore those e-mails asking you to sign up for **ParentSquare**! Later this month, APS will transition to **ParentSquare** as the platform for division-wide communications for families. The previous notification system will cease to function on August 31st.

ParentSquare allows APS to unify communication from the division, schools and classrooms to PreK-12 families under one umbrella. This platform is more secure and will allow families and staff to better protect their personal information when communicating with others. There is also an app!

With **ParentSquare** families will be able to:

- Receive messages from school via email, text or mobile app.
- Choose to receive information as it comes (Instant) or all at once at around 6:00pm (daily digest).
- Communicate in your preferred language.
- Two-way texting with automated translation between staff and families.
- Receive attendance notifications.
- Sign up for parent-teacher conferences.
- Sign permission slips *and more* all from your computer or mobile device.

All schools are being asked to encourage families to sign up. Important alerts will be sent regardless of whether or not you sign up, however, if you don't want to miss items like this newsletter, classroom news, and more, you will need to.

[Read more about ParentSquare \(and view tutorials\) here.](#)

School Lunch at MPSA & Applying for Free/Reduced Meals

You can view MPSA's breakfast and lunch menu through the [Nutrislice portal here](#). You can view what's being served and its nutritional value. APS does not serve pork or fried foods. Breakfast this year is **\$2.00**, and lunch this year is **\$3.25**. [You can see the prices of a la carte items here](#). Students in APS pay for their meals through a lunch account attached to their student IDs. Parents load money into the account via [MySchoolBucks](#). You can also avoid a fee by sending in a check/money order (payable to MPSA) or cash and bringing it to the office for deposit into your child's account.

If you would like to apply for free or reduced meals, please submit your application [here](#).

Upcoming Dates

- Monday, August 28: **First Day of School for All PreK4-5th Grade**
- Friday, September 1 & Monday, September 4: **NO SCHOOL (Labor Day holiday)**
- Wednesday, September 6: **Back-to-School Night**, 6PM
- Wednesday, October 11: **School Pictures** (Individual Portraits)

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/>

****SCROLL DOWN FOR THE PTA NEWSLETTER****

ACMPTA WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



What's Inside:

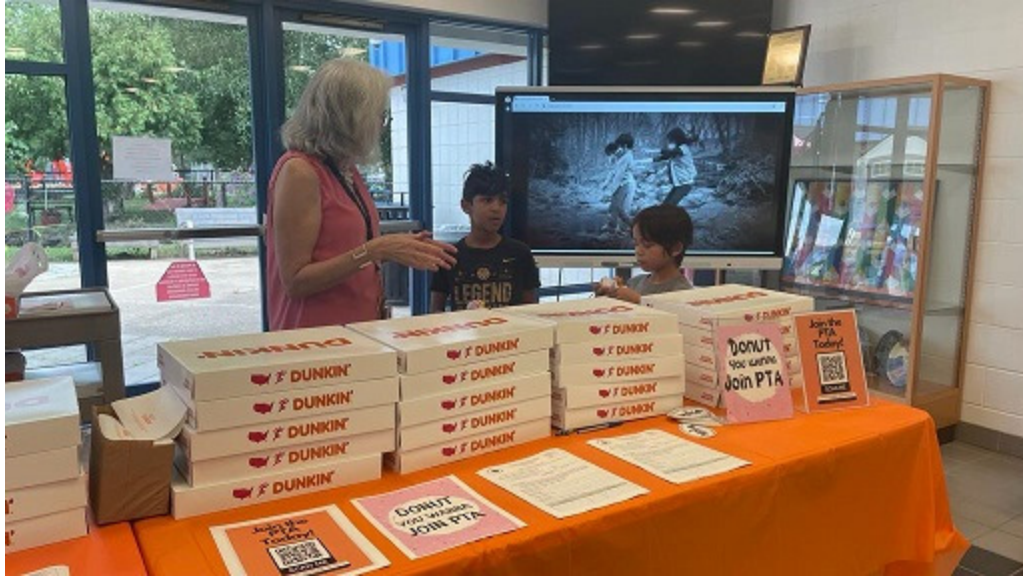
- Happy New School Year!
- *****PTA Garden Workday this Sunday*****
- Save the Date: PTA Reflections Art Competition
- Join Us on Social Media

Happy New School Year!

We welcome all our families, new and returning, to MPSA! We enjoyed getting a chance to speak to all of the families who stopped by our membership table during Thursday's open house! We enjoyed giving out free donuts and stickers for the chance to interact with the community.



Our PTA VP of Communication & Outreach, Jenn Gonzaga, and VP of Programs and Events, Sonali Singh...



...and their valued distribution assistants, their sons Ronin (Sonalí's) and Diego (Jenn's)!

It's a new school year so we invite you to join or rejoin our PTA! A portion of our PTA dues goes towards county, state and national fees; however a small portion does remain with us and will go into our general fund, which we will use towards supporting the MPSA community.

Being a member gives you the right to:

- Vote on PTA budget items
- Vote for leadership
- Have a voice at the State and National PTA levels
- Save money with PTA discounts from various vendors (Including 30% off Great Wolf Lodge and 25% off Medieval Times dinner theater/show!)

\$12 per person, **\$20** per household (2 memberships)

Sign up and pay for your membership in Memberhub at <https://acmpta.memberhub.com>

If you already have a Memberhub membership, you can renew your membership without creating a new profile. Just be sure to update your information.

To pay by check or money order (payable to ACMPTA), please mail your payment to

ACMPTA c/o Montessori Public School of Arlington

701 S. Highland Street

Arlington, VA 22204

ATTN: Kia Haynes

(You can also drop off your payment to the main office or send it to school via backpack mail to the attention of Kia Haynes.)

PTA Garden Workday This Sunday

Please join the ACMPTA this **Sunday, August 27th**, to help clean up our gardens and make them beautiful for the start of the school year! We will meet up at MPSA from **2PM to 4PM**. Bring gloves and tools if you have them, and a water bottle! No experience needed! Kids and extended family welcome! We will have **music** and **treats** for the kids to help celebrate the return to our shared community space!

If you can join us – or if you'd like to be added to the gardening committee e-mail list to be notified about future gardening dates, please e-mail gardening@acmpta.com.

Save the Date: PTA Reflections Art Competition

Explore the Arts and Express Yourself!

The 2023-2024 theme for the PTA Reflections Contest has been announced. It is "I am Hopeful Because..."

Reflections is a national competition organized annually by the National PTA to encourage arts in education. This competition is open to kids in grades Pre-K through 12 and entries are encouraged from all children across six different categories:

- *Dance Choreography*
- *Film*
- *Literature*
- *Music*
- *Photography*
- *Visual Arts*
- *Special Artist (Category for our students with special needs that is hosted by the Arlington Special Education PTA (SEPTA). Their works will be submitted with the Arlington Special Education PTA (SEPTA).*

More information on how to enter will come when we return to school, however, we encourage your young artists to begin working on their entries now! The ACMPTA **deadline** for all works to be submitted for our students at MPSA will be **Wednesday, October 18, 2023** by the end of the school day.

Read more about the Reflections Contest on the National PTA website [here](#).

For questions specific to the ACMPTA's participation, please e-mail reflections@acmpta.com.

Join Us on Social Media

- Our website: <https://www.acmpta.com/>
- Our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/ACMPTA/>
- Our Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/MPSAFamilies/>
- Our Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ArCoMontessori>
- Sign up for our Chat listserv: <https://groups.io/g/ACMPTA>

There is also a community Facebook group moderated by parents. It's a place to ask questions and exchange information. PTA & MPSA staff will often post items in that group that is not typically sent out in MPSA or PTA mailings. [MPSA Caregiver Community](#).