



School Talk

WEEKLY UPDATE!

March 2, 2024

Inside this Edition

- **March Happenings!**
- **A Visit from the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction**
- **MPSA Heritage Night is Next Week!**
- **March SEL Notes for Families**
- **Music Notes**
- **Staff Congratulations & One Farewell**
- **Class Pictures THIS Wednesday**
- **Drive SAFER + Attendance Reminders**
- **Upcoming Dates**
- **Keep in Touch**

A reminder that there is NO SCHOOL on Tuesday, March 5th!

March Happenings

Women's History Month: Commemorating and encouraging the study, observance and celebration of the vital role of women in American history.

Art in Schools Month: Supports students' intellectual development through artistic endeavors and celebrates arts in our schools.

Literacy and SEL Week: National SEL week is a **"SEL"ebration** of social and emotional learning in every community in the United States, culminating in **International #SELDay** on Friday, March 8th. Literacy ties in as there is an understanding that students' social and emotional competencies play a strong role in their ability to read up to their potential. Several basic social and emotional learning (SEL) skills are utilized when students are reading.

National School Breakfast Week: Celebrates the importance of a nutritious school breakfast in fueling students for success. APS takes it a step further by offering **FREE BREAKFAST** to all students for the ***entire month of March!***

National School Social Work Week: This week-long celebration shines a spotlight on the dedicated professionals who play a pivotal role in enhancing the well-being and success of students across the nation. We want to shout out MPSA's social worker, Kristin Decker, for her efforts to address students' needs to the best of her ability, which is amazing!

A Visit from the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction

Yesterday morning, MPSA was visited by **Dr. Lisa Coons**, the Virginia State Superintendent of Public Education. Dr. Coons, based at the Virginia Department of Education in Richmond, was visiting Arlington just for the morning, and MPSA is one of the 3 schools she was touring. She also visited Alice West Fleet and Claremont Immersion. Accompanied by Dr. Jeremy Raley (VDOE Chief of Staff), Dr. Francisco Duran (APS Superintendent) and Catherine Ashby (APS Assistant Superintendent of School and Community Relations), she visited Ms. Bruno and Ms. Kain's Primary classrooms; Ms. Joshi & Ms. Rubilotta's LEM classrooms; and ended with visits to Ms. Collier's and Ms. Lopatkiewicz's UEM classrooms. She had conversations with students and teachers, participated in some lessons and explored Montessori materials. The visit went very well, and we are thankful to everyone who made her feel welcome.

Students from Ms. Ross' UEM classroom worked with Ms. Barbour (art) to create this colorful welcome sign. They were the first students to greet her upon her arrival.



Dr. Coons sits for lessons in Ms. Collier's and Ms. Lopatkiewicz' UEM classrooms.



Dr. Coons receives a lesson while visiting Ms. Joshi's LEM classroom.



Dr. Coons observes a lesson lead by Ms. Kipperman in Ms. Bruno's Primary classroom.

MPSA Heritage Night is Next Week!

We are a community of many cultures – heritage from across the world are represented within our walls. Come out next **Thursday, March 7th**, to celebrate them with us!

We have so many fun activities planned, and so many things to show you! This will be a fun filled night that you won't want to miss.

If you can, please sign up to **volunteer** here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10COD4FAFA629ABFDC07-48241397-heritage#/>

Feel like cooking? Please sign up to bring a dish to share for our signature event of the evening – the **International Potluck!** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10COD4FAFA629ABFDC07-47903912-heritage#/>

We will end the evening with a fashion parade so please **DO** come dressed in clothing representing your heritage.

March SEL Notes for Families

Note: Please see the announcement sent out yesterday about next week's SEL Spirit Week!

Opportunities to Bridge SEL from School to Home

Families will often ask, “How can we practice social-emotional skills with our kids at home?” Social-emotional competencies can easily be taught, practiced, and reinforced at home in a way that feels natural and even fun. The best approach is to model and practice these skills for children in a way that feels authentic. What follows are some suggestions for working on each of these social-emotional skills at home.

Cooperation: One way to think about cooperation is the idea of working with others toward a common goal. Consider collaborating on projects that can be completed as a family. **Teachable Moment:** Solve an age-appropriate puzzle together. One approach is to assign jobs. For example, have some family members find the edges while others locate the middle pieces.

Assertiveness: Assertiveness can be defined as the ability to take initiative, to stand up for one's ideas without hurting or negating others, to seek help, to persevere with a challenging task, and to recognize one's individual self as separate from the environment, circumstances, or conditions one is in. Assertiveness is about clear and respectful communication and is a useful skill when conflicts and disagreements arise. **Teachable Moment:** Teach assertive sentence starters such as “I see it this way”. “Right now I am feeling like I want to” and “I respect your opinion, and I have a different perspective about that”.

Responsibility: Messaging to children that they are capable and able to depend on themselves helps to boost their confidence and self-esteem in academic and social settings. Practicing responsibility at home offers many opportunities to build that skill. **Teachable Moment:** Help your children pack their lunch and snacks (with guidance).

Empathy: Think of empathy as feeling with someone. Empathy helps build connections with one another and strengthens relationships, and it plays a critical role in shaping how we share experiences, how we perceive others' emotions, and the extent to which we can see the world from another's perspective. **Teachable Moment:** Model and encourage empathy skills by sharing what you notice about other people's feelings. For example, "My friend Rachel seemed really sad today. I checked in with her and she shared that her sister has a cold. She seemed worried about her sister."

Self-Control: Self-control can be seen as the ability to recognize and regulate one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in order to be successful in the moment and remain on a successful trajectory. **Teachable Moment:** Model your thought process and decisions based on self-control. For example: "I really want this whole chocolate cake because it looks so yummy. But I'm going to practice self-control and have just a slice instead" or "I notice I am starting to feel frustrated. I want to maintain my composure. I think I'll stop, sit down, and take a few deep breaths so I can be my best self when I handle this challenge".

There are plenty of times during a family's day-to-day living that offer opportunities to practice social and emotional skills. Families who make the effort to do so will not only help reinforce what is learned in school but will also positively influence relationships within the family.

Music Notes

March is *Arts in Schools Month*. Monarchs will celebrate this annual occasion in a variety of ways:

March 7, 14, 21. *Artist's Alley*

- *Artist's Alley* is a monthly pop-up forum showcasing student talent and creative interests. *Artist's Alley* will spotlight PTA Reflections participants during *Arts in Schools Month*.

March 7 MPSA Band, Chorus and Orchestra Ensemble pictures.

- Wear black and white or MPSA spirit attire.

March 12 Junior Honors Concert, 7:00 p.m. Kenmore Middle School

- APS Junior Honors music programs give elementary and middle school students the opportunity to grow and challenge themselves musically. These are auditioned groups; auditions are held in the fall of each school year, with rehearsals and performances beginning in January. We are pleased to announce the following students who will represent MPSA in this year's concert:
 - Casper A. (violin) and Avi F. (cello), Junior Honors Orchestra.
 - Saidarshan N. and Kira P.-M., Elementary Honors Chorus.

March 14 Education Theater Company's Shakespeare in Schools performance, Midsummer Night's Dream & Upper Elementary Improv/Paraphrase Workshop

- Shakespeare in the Schools (SIS) offers audiences the opportunity to enhance their understanding of Shakespeare through a combination of professional performances and workshops. Students make direct connections to the universal themes of Shakespeare's works and bridge classical text to modern context. Accompanying, interactive SIS Improv/Paraphrase

Workshops are led by ETC teaching artists and help students interpret and perform select scenes from *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

March 20 Hot Horns performance *Pop to Rock*, sponsored by APS Humanities Project

- Hot Horns incorporates its trademark combinations of various brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments, all performed by six friendly, enthusiastic musicians with backgrounds in education. The group performs various genres of music from classical to jazz, rock to pop and more, thanks to the talents of various arrangers.

Since its inception in 1973, The Humanities Project, an artist-in-education program administered by the Arlington Public Schools, provides arts opportunities through performances, workshops, residencies, and teacher professional development for each of Arlington's schools. Through this program, theater, dance, music, literary, and visual arts can be integrated into the curriculum.

Staff Congratulations and One Farewell

Last month, APS issued service awards to many MPSA staff members for their many years of service.

- Filamor Pangan, Cafeteria Manager (10 years)
- Henry Cardenas, Bilingual Family Liaison (25 years)
- John Koutsouftikis, Assistant Principal (25 years)



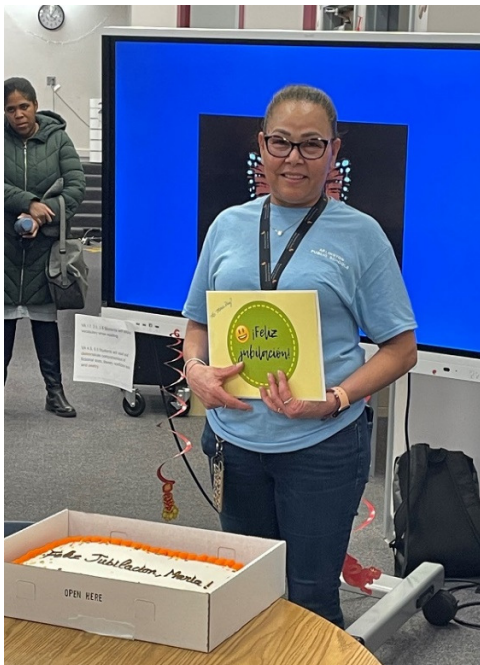
Cafeteria manager Filamor Pangan.

Congratulations to Lower Elementary teacher, Jaspreet Choudhary. She finished a 5-year course of study and was recently awarded the title of a National Board Certified Teacher, the highest certification a teacher can get!



Jaspreet Choudhary, National Board Certified Teacher

We are sad to have to say goodbye to long time custodian, Maria Diaz, who retired this past week. Her last day with MPSA was yesterday. The staff threw her a small farewell party the week before her last day.



Maria Diaz at her retirement party at MPSA.

Class Picture Day THIS Wednesday!

THIS Wednesday, MPSA will be taking class photos. Information on how to order the group picture online or by cash/check went home in backpack mail so please check your child's Thursday folder.

Drive SAFER + Attendance Reminders

Some **dangerous** and **selfish** maneuvers are still happening during drop off and pick up. We understand that people may be in a rush, but that is no excuse to

- Double park, often blocking other cars and the roadway.
- Cutting the line, because you are impatient or running late.
- Parking in the kiss-and-ride and walking your child to the door instead of finding appropriate parking so you don't hold up the line. (And doing the same at pick up.)
- Crossing the road in the middle of the street instead of walking to a crosswalk.
- Speeding through the parking lot to drop off to or pick up from school/Extended Day.
- Ignoring or yelling at staff trying to correct/prevent you from the above behaviors.

Adults are supposed to be the example – your children are watching you break rules and exhibit these behaviors that not only put others at risk but put them at risk as well. ***Do not be the reason we have to call the police or, even worse, an ambulance.***

Upcoming Dates

- Tuesday, March 5: **NO SCHOOL for Students**, (Teacher Work Day due to Primary Voting)
- Thursday, March 7: **Class Picture Day**
- Thursday, March 7: **MPSA Heritage Night**
- Thursday, March 14: **EARLY RELEASE**, Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Friday, March 15: **NO SCHOOL for Students**, Parent-Teacher Conferences

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
- MPSA Science on Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/MPSA_Science
- 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?

- **Nominating Committee Needed!**
- **PTA Meeting Postponed to March 12th**
- **Celebrating Our Reflections Contest Winners**
- **Very FEW Extra Yearbooks Ordered This Year! Don't Miss Out!**
- **Nominating Committee Forming**
- **Join the PTA or Sponsor a Staff Member**

PTA Meeting Postponed until March 12th

The PTA General meeting has been moved to next week! Please mark your calendars!

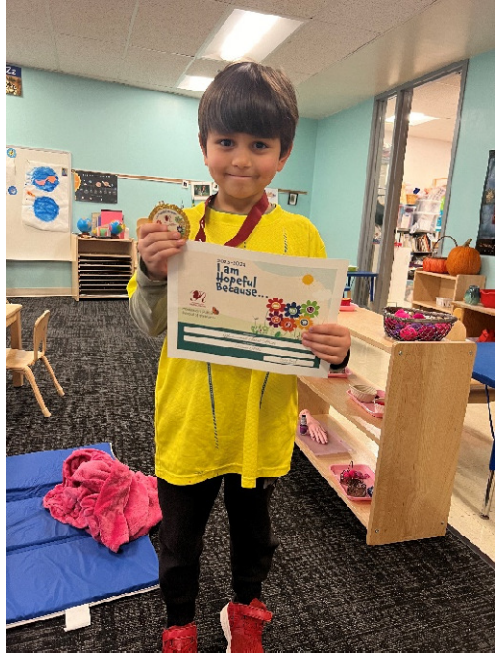
The meeting is held via Zoom. **Meeting ID:** 399 269 8481, **Passcode:** MPSA23

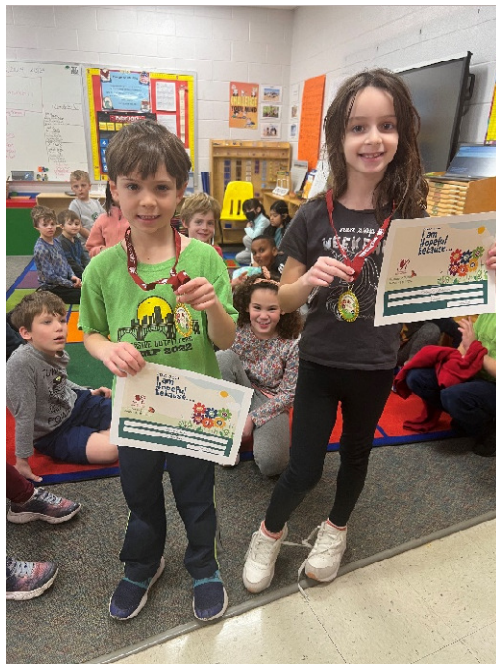
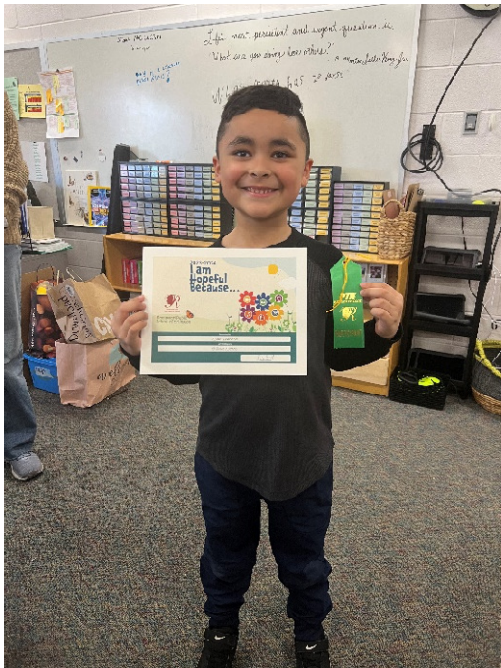
If you have any questions or concerns you'd like the PTA to address, please direct them to info@acmpta.com at least 1 day prior to the meeting.

Celebrating Our Reflections Contest Winners

The PTA Reflections chairs, **Vaneshree Moodley** and **Vidisha Parasram**, delivered medals and certificates to our MPSA Reflections contest winners. Here are pics of some (not all) of the winners.







On Tuesday, February 27, the finalists from our in-school contest who made it to the county level were recognized at a CCPTA Reflections ceremony held at Washington-Liberty High School.



And a big congratulations to Sloane Cowart for her Award of Merit for Intermediate Division in the Visual Arts Category at the State level for her sculpture "A New Beginning".



Very FEW Extra Yearbooks Ordered This Year! Don't Miss Out!

Every year we have families who decide not to order because they want to see the yearbook first...***and they end up missing out!***

The PTA is not given extra yearbooks to sell – we must purchase them ourselves in the hopes that we sell them all, which is why our supply will be limited. ***So don't hesitate – order now!***

Our past yearbooks have always been well received as they are colorful, beautifully designed and full of stunning pictures.

Go to ybpay.com and enter yearbook ID code **13279124**. There are several packages to choose from.

Deadline to purchase is April 12th.

Nominating Committee Forming

It's almost time for PTA elections! The ACMPTA needs a nominating committee of at least 3 members to help recruit and screen candidates for the PTA's Executive Committee for the SY2024-2025. If you are interested, please e-mail info@acmpta.com

This committee will need to present their slate for next year's candidates before the end of April so members can vote in May. The new Executive Board, except for the Treasurer, would begin their service immediately after election.

Join the PTA or Sponsor a Staff Member

Membership is **\$12** per person, or **\$20** for 2 people. Cash and check will be accepted or sign up through our [online portal on Membership Hub](#). Signing up to be a member is also the easiest fundraising effort you could make as a portion of the dues goes into our general fund. Already have a membership? Consider sponsoring a staff member. We require staff to be a paid PTA member to receive a PTA grant. Help them out by purchasing them a membership!