



## NORTH BETHESDA MIDDLE SCHOOL

### HOME OF THE PHOENIX!

“Our school provides an environment where all students thrive emotionally, academically, and socially”



Office of the Principal

August 2, 2023

#### ***NBMS Vision***

***We envision a learning environment where individual differences are valued, and every student achieves personal growth and academic success. Strong positive relationships between staff and students are nurtured so that every student has room to take intellectual risks, think broadly, self-advocate, and support their community.***

#### ***NBMS Mission***

***Our school provides an environment where all students thrive emotionally, academically, and socially.***

Dear NBMS Families:

On behalf of the North Bethesda Middle School faculty and staff, I welcome you to the 2023-2024 school year. Our building service team, led by Ms. Beverly Prather, has been working tirelessly to prepare the building and grounds for our return to school on Monday, August 28, 2023. This has been done while we have been having a new roof put on the building and less than ideal working conditions! My heartfelt appreciation goes out to this team as we could not operate daily without them.

Dr. Monifa McKnight, MCPS Superintendent of Schools, has shared system priorities for the 2023-2024 school year. MCPS is committed to enhancing community engagement and continuing to:

- rebuild trust
- provide equitable teaching and learning for our students
- care for the well-being of our community

The NBMS leadership team's priorities and the school's mission and vision align with the system's priorities. We are committed to this work as we strive to provide students with the world-class educational experience they deserve. We look forward to engaging you in our school improvement work so that we can meet the needs of all students!

In response to the NBMS anti-racist, anti-bias audit, I am seeking parents to serve on a parent panel during pre-service week from 10:15 – 11:15 am on 8/22 in which we will be soliciting parent voices on how to make NBMS a more inclusive community. If you are interested, please complete this [Google form](#). If we still have room on the panel, I will be in touch to confirm and provide a preview of the questions.

At NBMS, we value strong collaborative relationships with our community. We *aspire to inspire* all North Bethesda families to be actively engaged in our school and their child's individual academic performance and social development. To continue and enhance this valuable engagement, we have several forms of communication:

**Weekly News and Notes:** Each week, on Sunday, I send a weekly email and a short phone message containing the NBMS News and Notes through Connect-Ed along with a brief phone message sharing highlights for the week and links to grade level updates. The News and Notes includes timely information about school activities and initiatives, system updates, information about extracurricular activities and athletics, PTSA information and helpful counseling updates. These publications will also be available on our website.

**Global Announcements:** Announcements for students are published daily on MyMCPS Canvas classroom at 7:00 a.m. Dr. Smith, grade level administrators, and/or students read highlights of these announcements over the P.A. each morning.

**ConnectEd Calls:** In addition to the Sunday message, if it is determined that parents and guardians need information immediately, the school will send a ConnectEd call and/or email out to the community.

**School Website:** The site includes information on Grade Level Teams, Counseling, Athletics, Media Center, and Curriculum Information. Please take a moment to explore our website at <https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/northbethesdams/>

**ParentVUE and myMCPS classroom:** This platform allows parents to view grades, access teacher resources, and receive important information from teachers. If you do not already have an account, you will need to sign up for an account to access the information relevant to your child's education. To login into ParentVUE and access resources, click this link:  
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/parents/tech-info-support.aspx>

**Twitter: @NBMS principal** Social media is not just for kids! Twitter is a great way to receive quick reminders about school events, hear of exciting classroom experiences, and see pictures of key events.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

### **[MCPS COMPREHENSIVE CALENDAR](#)**

**NBMS Back to School Night: Thursday, August 31, 2023 -- More Details to Come**

## **PTSA**

At North Bethesda Middle School, we are fortunate to have an active PTSA. This year we have a new PTSA President, Amy Rivas [president@nbmsptsa.org](mailto:president@nbmsptsa.org). I know Mrs. Rivas will welcome your engagement and involvement. Here is some information from the PTSA pertaining to the start of the school year.

## **Picnic for Families of 6th Graders and Families New to NBMS**

Please join us on **Thursday, August 24th at 6pm** between the soccer field and basketball courts, for some family fun and pizza! More details to follow!

## **PTSA Kickoff Meeting**

Mark your calendars for August 29th at 7pm in the cafeteria, to meet our wonderful board and families! Together we can make this school year one to remember!

## **Memberships and Listserv**

Please join the PTSA! Information about joining will be shared at the kick off meeting and at Back to School Night.

The NBMS listserv is open to parents of current students, school staff, and MCCPTA outreach staff. To join the NBMS listservs:

- Sign in to [Google Groups](#).
- At the top, click My groups and select All groups and messages.
- In the search box, enter North Bethesda Middle School PTSA Group and press Enter.
- Click on North Bethesda Middle School PTSA Group
- Click Ask to join group
- You will receive an email confirming approval of your membership.

**Please note:** It may take up to 5 days to receive a confirmation email as all requests for membership are approved by the NBMS Listserv Moderator (and sometimes they are on vacation or busy!)

## **Additional Information**

### **Bus Routes/Student Drop-off/Safety Reminders:**

**Unfortunately, we are still waiting for the system to send us our bus routes. We will send them out as soon as they are available.**

Our regular school hours for the 2023-2024 school year are 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily. We cannot provide supervision for students prior to 7:45 a.m. nor after 3:15 p.m. Students riding school buses are encouraged to do so beginning Monday, August 28th. Students will become familiar with the bus stops and route numbers.

Please refer to the bus route list I will be sending out and posting on our website for the locations and times of pick-up. School bus routes are identified by their route number, which are displayed in the window.

Parents should be aware that road construction, poor weather conditions, and accidents are real traffic stoppers in the NBMS area, so buses may be legitimately delayed when picking up students in the morning. School buses experience the same traffic delays as the rest of us, sometimes even more so, and bus drivers tend to be more cautious than the average commuter. Additionally, buses may run slower the first two weeks of school, as the drivers are still adjusting to new routes.

There is considerable traffic each day as buses arrive and parents drop off and pick up students. **In the interest of safety, we ask parents to drop off and pick up students in the designated Student Drop-Off area in front of the school building.** Please drop your students off on the curbside of the car. ***Please do not use the Johnson Drive entrance as that is for buses and staff.***

We realize it may be time-consuming to wait in line, but in bypassing the stream of cars and dropping off a student in the middle of the traffic circle or parking lot, a student would need to walk between cars, creating a dangerous situation. If you need additional time when dropping off children, please move along to the far end of the circle so others may exit.

***If a student would like to ride a different bus to go home with a friend, send the student a note that includes the full name, bus route number, telephone number, and parent signature.*** Your student will have to get signed approval from one of our security assistants, Mr. Andre Gaines, or Mr. James Rice, or an administrator. The bus driver will collect the note from your student when boarding the bus. *Please be aware that some buses may be too full to take additional students.* The Bethesda Depot Transportation Cluster Manager (TCM), Mr. Randolph Mussotte, informs us which buses cannot take additional passengers due to capacity. Questions regarding bus transportation should be addressed to the Bethesda Depot of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation. Phone: 240-740-6580 or E-Mail: [Randolph\\_Mussotte@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Randolph_Mussotte@mcpsmd.org).

Please assist us in providing the safest environment possible for all our students. If your child rides a bicycle or skateboard to and from school, please remind your child to wear a helmet and walk or carry the "vehicle" onto school property. Bicycle racks are in the front of the building. Students may store skateboards and scooters under the stairway in the front lobby upon arrival.

### **Extracurricular Activities (ECA)**

**Philosophy:** The extracurricular Activities (ECA) Program is an integral part of the total education process for middle school students. After school activities provide students with the opportunity to explore new areas of interest, cultivate and enhance existing skills, and grow both socially and cognitively in a safe and supportive environment. Although these activities take place after the school day, all our goals, rules and expectations remain the same.

Staff supervise school-sponsored classes and clubs, intramurals, and athletics throughout the school year. These NO FEE classes are open to all students. Information about clubs will be communicated to students in the global announcements during the month of September. If you have any questions, please send them to Tirza Carmichael Collins at [tirza\\_carmichaelcollins@mcpsmd.org](mailto:tirza_carmichaelcollins@mcpsmd.org).

We will be sending out more information closer to the start of school when club sponsors are identified.

### **Intramural Sports**

These activities are available to all students.

Intramural Coordinator: Mrs. Jessica Gallagher [jessica\\_y\\_gallagher@mcpsmd.org](mailto:jessica_y_gallagher@mcpsmd.org)

**Interscholastic Sports:** Grade 7 and Grade 8 students may try out for the boys' and girls' interscholastic softball team and cross-country. Registration for middle school athletics will be conducted through the [ParentVUE Portal](#). Registration will open on August 15, 2022, at 12:00 noon. The ParentVUE online registration portal incorporates all required paper forms and documents into an internet-based platform that parents/guardians/caregivers can access using a secure ParentVUE Portal login. Parents/guardians/caregivers are also able to scan and upload their student's physical, as part of the registration process. A physical [\(SR-8\)](#) is needed in order to try out.

If you have any questions, please contact our athletic director, Mr. Barry Gibbons at [barry\\_gibbons@mcpsmd.org](mailto:barry_gibbons@mcpsmd.org)

## **Cafeteria**

The first few days of school students will sit with homerooms as we review processes and expectations for the cafeteria. Please encourage your students to be personally responsible in cleaning up after themselves and maintaining respectful behavior in the cafeteria.

Students in Maryland who qualify for reduced-price meals will not be charged for meals.

## **Meal Prices**

- Breakfast: Regular Price (All Levels): \$1.30; Reduced Price (All Levels): No Cost
- Lunch: \$2.80 (Middle and High); Reduced Price (All Levels): No Cost

Students may qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on household size and income. They may also qualify if they are receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA), or Medicaid benefits. Families may apply for meal benefits by completing an Application for Free and Reduced-Price Meals for the current school year.

Applications: Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) applications have been updated for the new school year, and are now available online at [www.MySchoolApps.com](http://www.MySchoolApps.com); this is the preferred application method.

•Apply online NOW at [MySchoolApps.com](http://MySchoolApps.com) (Translations available) Click [here](#) for an English video tutorial. Click [here](#) for a Spanish video tutorial.

**Federal eligibility guidelines change each school year; therefore, a new application must be submitted each school year.** All students in the family should be listed on one household application. A notice will be mailed home to each student if you are approved for meal benefits or do not qualify for meal benefits. Please keep this important document for your records and use throughout the school year. Families may apply for meal benefits at any time during the school year.

Households that are unable to apply online should contact their school or the Division of Food and Nutrition Services at 240-740-7400. If you would like a paper application, please contact the main office anytime after 8/17/2023

Read more about Food and Nutritional Services here:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/food-and-nutrition/>

### **Chromebooks and School Supplies**

At North Bethesda Middle School we utilize a 1:1 Chromebook device model. We will be providing guidelines to cultivate student responsibility in caring for the devices and to mitigate damage to the devices. As you may recall, rising 7th and 8th graders retained their Chromebooks over the summer. We will be issuing Chromebooks to 6th graders and new to NBMS students during the first two weeks of school. If

Here is a link to the [School Supply List for 2023-2024](#).

**If you have any financial concerns regarding school supplies, please reach out to your child's counselor and we can help ensure that your student has everything they need.**

### **School Cash Online**

Montgomery County Public School utilizes an online payment system called SchoolCash Online as its preferred method of payment for all school-related fees.

SchoolCash Online helps parents/guardians and community members pay school-related fees safely, quickly, and easily. *(Please note that the new payment system is NOT related to school cafeteria accounts)*

SchoolCash Online will help increase efficiency and security at schools by making payments directly into schools' bank accounts and eliminating the need for teachers to handle money. In addition, once registered, you will be immediately informed about school activities!

Powered by KEV Group, SchoolCash Online is the industry leader in the management of school fees. The system puts all of the school-related fees online for purchase so users can make purchases online using a credit card or echeck. A processing fee will be included on all items available for purchase, regardless of the type of payment used on SchoolCash Online or at the school.

**Parents/guardians can register now at - <https://mcpsmd.schoolcashionline.com/>**

### **Staffing Changes**

This year we have added a new Autism Resource Services program and as a result we have received additional staffing. We had four staff members move on to high school, one who resigned from MCPS, and we received additional general education staffing. We are thankful to the staff who are moving on for serving NBMS over the years with dedication and commitment. We wish them the best in their new ventures. We welcome and are excited to have hired talented, energetic and experienced staff for the 2023-2024 school year.

Kearney Blandamer, English 7  
Jordan Baucom, Physical Education/Health  
Nina Eisenberg, Special Education  
Barry Gibbons, Physical Education/Health  
Kelsey Guerinot, Autism Resource Services  
Kathlene Humphrey, Algebra and Math 7  
Liam McDermott, US History 8  
Brian Perlson Math/English  
Clint Sandford, Investigations in Science 6  
Brianna Savadow, Autism Resource Services  
Theresa Vaghi, Autism Resource Services

### **School Calendar**

The MCPS calendar with all scheduled school holidays is linked below

[MCPS COMPREHENSIVE CALENDAR](#)

[Interim and Report Card Dates](#)

[Bell Schedules](#)

### **Student Agenda Books.**

Although there are many policies, procedures, and regulations in MCPS, we have included the most relevant ones in the student agenda book. Teachers will facilitate discussions with students about the handbook's contents. A copy will be posted on our school website. This required book will be distributed to all students at no cost on the first day of school. For a lost handbook, there is a \$5.00 replacement cost.

### **Protocol for Resolving Matters of Concern**

- If you have a concern about a class, please contact the teacher **FIRST**.
- If the issue is unresolved at that level, please then contact the department content specialist.
- The next level of support is to contact the grade-level administrator.
- If issues are not resolved at any of these levels, then contact the principal at 240-740-2100.
- To schedule a parent conference with your student's team, for class schedule issues, or other counseling matters, please contact the **counseling department, 240-740-2110**.
- For matters involving your child unrelated to teachers, counselors, or specific classes, please contact the grade-level administrator.
- If the issue cannot be resolved at that level, please contact the principal.

<b>Content</b>	<b>Content Specialist</b>
Arts/PE/Health	Ms. Emily Valonis
English	Mr. Matthew Ghaman
World Languages/Music	Ms. Kristy Myers
Math	Ms. Amy Watkins
Science/Technology	Ms. Katherine Connolly
Social Studies	Mr. Eric Kling
Special Education	Ms. Leigh Mayfield
Counseling	Ms. Jennifer Sadara

**MAIN NUMBERS**

Main Office                    240-740-2100    Counseling Office        240-740-2110  
Main Office Fax            301-571-3881    Counseling Fax            301-571-7752  
Attendance Office        240-740-2101    Cafeteria Manager        240-740-2104  
Health Room                240-740-2102    Media Center                240-740-2098

<b>Principal: Dr. AnneMarie Kestner Smith</b>			
<b>GRADE</b>	<b>TEAM LEADERS</b>	<b>COUNSELOR</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATOR</b>
6	Mrs. Jennifer Byrd TBD	A - M (Mrs. Rice) N - Z (Mr. Yeom)	Mrs. Rudd
7	Mrs. Rachel Lazarick-Ward Mr. Paul Lutchenkov	A - O (Ms. Karbeling) P - Z (Ms. Sadara)	Mrs. Collins
8	Ms. Monica Hepburn Mr. Benjamin Leffler	A - Q (Mrs. Mendelson) R - Z (Mr. Yeom)	Mr. Werbeck



*To contact all other staff, please email individually, or call 240-740-2100 to leave a brief message. Teachers may take up to 48 hours to respond. Email addresses may be found on the NBMS website:*

<https://www2.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/northbethesdams/staff/directory/#Principal>

## SUMMER LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Click [here](#) for a link to our summer learning activities for students.

## MCPS VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

Maryland State law requires that to attend preschool programs or schools, students must receive vaccinations on a schedule determined by the Center for Disease Control. Students may be exempted from these requirements if a healthcare provider states that the vaccinations are medically contraindicated, or for religious objections. **Maryland State law requires that families provide proof of vaccinations within 20 days of the first day of school, which is Monday, August 28, 2023.**

**PLEASE NOTE: Incoming Grade 7 students need to provide documentation of one Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis (Tdap) and one dose of Meningococcal (MCV4).**

## IMPORTANT DATES:

**Grade 6 and New Student Orientation Day:** Thursday, August 24, 8:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. This event is for incoming sixth grade students only or recently enrolled 7th or 8th grade students. Recently enrolled 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders new to NBMS will have the opportunity to attend an information session and receive a tour of the school. *New to NBMS 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, please reach out to your child's counselor if your child plans on attending. Sixth grade students do not need to RSVP.*

Orientation will provide new students with an opportunity to walk the building, meet their teachers, and most importantly, students will have the opportunity to practice opening lockers (there will be a bank of lockers for students to try – students will receive their lockers during opening week.) Students who are unable to attend will participate in orientation and team building activities the first week of school. Transportation will be provided to and from school for our students who would normally ride a school bus.

*Returning 7th and 8th grade students will receive schedules on the first day of school and should not attend orientation.*

**First Day of School:** Monday, August 28, 2023. Our doors open for students at 7:45 a.m. and dismissal is promptly at 3:00 p.m.

- 6th Grade students should enter by the cafeteria entrance.
- 7th Grade students should enter by the music entrance at the top of the bus loop.

- 8th Grade students should enter by the main entrance.

**Back-To-School-Night (BTSN):** Thursday, August 31, 2023, we will be hosting an in-person BTSN. More details to come soon; however, we begin the evening with specialized meetings (Family Life curriculum overview and meetings for parents/guardians of special education and English Language Learner (ELL) beginning at 5:30 p.m. The school-wide event begins at 6:45 p.m. and ends at 8:30 p.m. Parking will be limited so you may wish to consider carpooling or parking at Wyngate Elementary and walking over to NBMS.

North Bethesda Middle School is a special place, and I am humbled and honored to be the principal. It has been my mission to hire the best teachers and staff who love middle school students and for whom education is their passion. It makes me think of the quote by Brad Henry: “A good teacher can inspire hope, ignite the imagination, and instill a love of learning.” I like to think of North Bethesda Middle School as a place where hope is inspired and inspiration ignites because of the support of our community, the amazing students, and our incredible staff. We are looking forward to an inspiring year!

Thank you for your past and future support. We will continue to nurture a school climate where excellence in teaching and learning is a daily reality for every student and our students feel cared for and safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "AnneMarie Kestner Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

AnneMarie Kestner Smith, Ed.D.  
Principal

AKS:kmb  
Attachments