



Work hard. Be kind. Be safe.
Dream BIG!

Dear RICA Families and Students,

I am pleased to report that back to school night was a success. Thank you to the MDH and residential staff for planning an amazing carnival with food, prizes and fun for all in attendance. It was wonderful to watch teamwork in action. In addition I want to thank our staff that provided an overview of the curriculum for each grade level. Looking forward to another successful week ahead. Thank you!

Ms. Khadija Mitchell
Acting Principal
RICA

Please remember Friday, September 18th is an early release day for students. We will follow the early release “A” bell schedule below with periods 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7. Monday, September 21, 2026 all schools are closed.

Bell Schedule
RICA
26-27
EARLY RELEASE



Early Release A

Period	Time
Teacher Planning	8:30 - 9:15
AM Homeroom	9:15 - 9:30
1	9:32 - 10:14
2	10:16 - 10:58
3	11:00 - 11:42
LUNCH A	LUNCH B
Lunch A 11:44 - 12:14	RISE 11:44 - 12:14
RISE 12:17 - 12:47	Lunch B 12:17 - 12:47
7	12:49 - 1:20
Student Dismissal	1:20 - 1:30

Save the Dates:

School Pictures: November 5th, 2026

Prom: May 14th, 2027

Graduation: June 9th, 2027 at 6:00pm

8th grade promotion: (TBD)

Back to School Night Feedback:

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Back to School Night last night! It was wonderful to see so many of our families in the building, and we truly appreciate you taking the time to come out and learn more about the school, our staff, and the year ahead.

We had a great turnout and a great evening! Your partnership and involvement make such a difference in supporting our students.

We would love to hear your feedback about the evening. Please take a few minutes to complete the [Back to School Night Evaluation/Feedback Form](#). Your feedback will help us continue to make these events meaningful and helpful for our families.

We have also included the [slideshow presentation](#) from the evening for your reference.

ATSI Designation:

Members of the RICA Community- Please read the following letter regarding our schools ATSI status.

[RICA ATSI Community Letter](#)

MCPS Information-

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Important Information to Share with Families!

Calendar Reminder: Friday, Sept. 18 is an early release day for all students. Monday, Sept. 21 is a non-instructional day; there will be no school for students and teachers. See the MCPS School Year calendar online [here](#), or download the family-friendly calendar [here](#).

Attendance Matters. Being Present Matters. Every Day Matters.

We get it, mornings can be hectic. Alarm clocks don't cooperate, shoes disappear and sometimes getting everyone out the door deserves its own trophy. But being in school really does matter.

Every day in class is another chance to learn something new, see friends, connect with teachers and keep moving forward. And those "just a day here and there" absences? They can add up fast. Missing 10% of the school year, 18 days, is considered chronic absenteeism. That's not good.

MCPS is a great place to be; it's a place to belong. We want your student here, connected and

part of our school community every day.

[Need help?](#)

Saturday School Is Back—The Sixth Day of Learning Can Go a Long Way!

Sleeping in is great. But you know what else feels pretty good? **Getting ahead.** Saturday School is gearing up for another year of learning, confidence-building and extra academic support for MCPS students. With certified teachers, support aligned with the MCPS curriculum and locations across the county, it's a Saturday morning well spent.

Opening ceremonies are Saturday, Sept. 19, and registration is coming up—so don't forget to get your student signed up!

[Learn more about Saturday School and register](#)

One Quick, Confidential Application. More Support for Your Family.

Here's one school form that's worth a few minutes of your time. If your family may qualify for Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS), apply! There's no stigma, no special lunch line and no reason to hesitate. A student's eligibility is confidential, and students receiving free meals use the cafeteria just like everyone else.

Best of all, you only need one application for all MCPS students in your household, even if they attend different schools.

It's quick. It's confidential. And it could make a real difference for your family. Don't count yourself out, take a few minutes and see if you qualify.

[Apply for FARMS and learn more](#)

College, Meet Your Future Student

College possibilities are coming to one place! MCPS juniors and seniors are invited to College Fairs USA on Friday, Oct. 9, from 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. at Bohrer Park. Students can meet college representatives, ask questions, explore options, and start figuring out what might feel like the right fit.

Grades 11–12: Don't miss your chance to explore what's next. Check with your school counseling office for information about attending and registration.

College Fairs USA Student Flyers in [English](#), Student registration information [here](#)

Grading & Reporting: One-Page Guidance

MCPS has updated its [Grading & Reporting guidance](#) to provide students and families with clearer, more timely information about assignments, grades and academic progress.

The goal is simple: clear expectations, timely communication and strong academic support so students know what is expected and families have the information they need to help.

See the [One-Page Guidance here](#).

Additional, but Good to Share

A Reminder: Quick Answers for Families, All in One Place

Need a quick answer about MCPS? Remember, the Quick Guides for Families are available throughout the school year to help you find clear, easy-to-use information when you need it. Find helpful guidance on ParentVUE and digital tools, transportation, grading and assessments, study skills, school safety, mental health, student conduct, social media, personal mobile devices and more. Many resources are available in eight languages.

[Explore the MCPS Quick Guides for Families](#)

Family Quick Guide Pullout: Study Skills That Make a Difference for Students with IEPs/504 Plans

Every child learns differently. Building a few consistent habits at home can help your child strengthen learning, gain confidence and become more independent. Your child's IEP or 504 Plan is a great place to start.

Try these simple strategies at home:

- **Create a routine.** Set a consistent time and quiet place for homework, reading or practicing skills.
- **Break it down.** Turn larger assignments into smaller steps. Visual schedules, checklists, timers and picture supports can help.
- **Build independence.** Give your child time to try, problem-solve and make choices before stepping in to help.
- **Encourage self-advocacy.** Help your child understand what helps them learn and practice asking for the support they need.
- **Use what works at school.** Bring helpful IEP/504 strategies home, such as frequent breaks, extended time, graphic organizers, assistive technology or text-to-speech tools.
- **Make everyday moments learning moments.** Read together, practice math while cooking or shopping, have conversations, play games and build organization and daily living skills.
- **Stay connected.** Keep in touch with teachers, case managers and service providers. Share what's working, ask questions and celebrate progress together.

Remember: Small daily habits can make a big difference. Focus on effort and growth—not perfection. And when you need support, your child's school team is there to partner with you.

A Reminder for Grade 8 Families: Start Exploring High School!

High school is just around the corner! Grade 8 families can now begin exploring their local high school and optional **Center programs** in STEM, medical science, IB and humanities, leadership, the arts and more.

Join a **Virtual Information Session Sept. 14 or Sept. 23**, and watch for your student's personalized **High School Possibility Report** in ParentVUE and StudentVUE in October. **Round 1 applications are due Nov. 6.** Start exploring now—there's a lot to look forward to! Learn more [here](#).

Love Sports? Get Involved Behind the Scenes

MCPS Athletics has many opportunities to get involved, even if you don't play sports. Opportunities are available to serve as managers, scorekeepers, statisticians and photographers. For more information, reach out to your school's [athletic coordinator](#) (middle school) or [athletic director](#) (high school).

Helping to Keep Schools Safe

During the week of Sept. 21–25, secondary schools will partner with the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office to offer one of two student assemblies addressing opioid/fentanyl awareness and school and gun violence prevention.

- **Speak Up, Save a Life** discusses the dangers of fentanyl and other dangerous opioids, and shares what to do if you see someone who has overdosed.
- **Working Together to Keep Schools Safe and Gun Free** addresses school shootings, local gun violence, gun laws and ghost guns, and emphasizes the importance of speaking up when something doesn't seem right.

Wear Your MCPS Pride—and Make a Difference!

Show your MCPS spirit with official gear for the whole family! From sweatshirts and pullovers to shirts and more, there's something for every MCPS fan. **Best of all, every purchase gives back—all proceeds help offset student meal debt.**

Shop the [MCPS Gear Store](#) today!

Stay Connected to MCPS

- **VISIT** the [MCPS homepage](#).
- **CALL** 240-740-3000. Staff take calls from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, in English and Spanish (240-740-2845). Visit the [AskMCPS website](#).
- **READ** news and information sent via email and text message and on the [MCPS News](#) page.
- **FOLLOW** the MCPS social media pages:
[x.com/mcps](#) / [facebook.com/mcpsmd](#) / [instagram.com/mcps_md](#)
[facebook.com/mcpsespanol](#) / [x.com/MCPSEspanol](#) /
[instagram.com/mcpsenespanol](#)
- **SIGN UP** for [emails and text alerts](#) and make sure your [ParentVue](#) information is up to date.
- **WATCH** the MCPS cable channels Comcast 34 (1071 HD), Verizon 36 or RCN 89

More MCPS Resources

- [School calendar](#)
- [Parent resource page](#)
- [News and Information page](#) / [Noticias en Español](#)
- [Latest photo galleries](#)
- [MCPS TV videos](#)
- [MCPS TV español](#)

Info Worth Repeating

Hate Bias Protocols

Remind your child that if something doesn't feel right, they should tell a trusted adult. [Learn more about MCPS hate/bias protocols.](#)

Student Code of Conduct 26-27 (Please Read)

Review the Student Code of Conduct. [This document](#) helps us create schools that are welcoming, respectful, orderly and safe.

MCPS Grading and Reporting Website

[Grading and Reporting Information Website](#)

Purpose: To provide updated information about the revisions to Regulation IKA-RA.

Website Resources:

- [Grading and Reporting FAQs](#)
- [Grading and Reporting Revisions Quick Reference Guide](#)
- [Revised Middle School Report Card Mock-Up](#)
- [Revised High School Report Card Mock-Up](#)

The website also includes links to centrally created community messages and the [Board of Education Presentation](#) on June 4, 2026.

No Cell, Bell to Bell

This school year all Montgomery County Public Schools will be restricting the use of cell phones during school hours. These restrictions are in alignment with the [Maryland Phone-Free School Act \(HB 525\)](#). Effective the first day of school, August 24, 2026, all students are not permitted to utilize personal mobile devices (cell phones, tablets, e-readers, personal laptops, smart watches, smart glasses, and anything with a microphone, camera, speaker, or headphones/earbuds (including AirPods) during the instructional day. This includes during lunch and in the hallways as students transition to class.



NO CELL, BELL TO BELL

Family & Student Guide
Learning First. Every Student. Every Day.

**Personal Mobile Devices Stay Put Away
THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE ACADEMIC DAY.**

WHY

Phones and other personal devices can be a major distraction during the school day. **Keeping devices away helps students focus on learning, connect with one another, and supports a safer, healthier school environment.**

Maryland has also passed the Joanne C. Benson Maryland Phone-Free School Act, requiring school districts to limit student device use beginning in 2027-2028. MCPS is starting the transition this year so students, staff and families have time to adjust.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW

Students may bring a phone or personal mobile device to school – but it must be put away and unused for the entire Academic Day.
That means devices stay away during:
Class • Hallways • Passing Periods • Lunch • Recess • Restrooms

DO

- ✓ Put your device away before the school day begins.
- ✓ Keep it away until the dismissal bell.
- ✓ Follow staff directions.
- ✓ Use school-issued technology when directed by your teacher.

Don't

- ✗ Text, call or use social media.
- ✗ Take photos, video or audio recordings.
- ✗ Use AirPods, earbuds or headphones connected to a personal device.
- ✗ Use a smartwatch or other personal device during the Academic Day.

Before school? After school? During the Academic Day? Put it away.

WHAT HAPPENS IF...?

- Unauthorized use will result in discipline aligned with the MCPS Student Code of Conduct and will include your device being taken away and secured until the end of the school day.
- Repeated violations may result in additional consequences, including not being permitted to bring the device to school.

IMPORTANT EXCEPTIONS: Some students may use a device when specifically authorized for an IEP, 504 Plan, medical or other approved accommodation, emergency or caregiving need, language translation, or another permitted school purpose. MCPS is not responsible for personal devices that are lost, stolen or damaged at school.

Montgomery County Public Schools 2026

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