



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, 2024

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 new school year. Our building service team, led by Ms. Alicia Rodriguez, has been working tirelessly to prepare the building and grounds for our return on Monday, August 26, 2024. My heartfelt appreciation goes out to this team, as we could not operate daily without them. Additionally, this summer, we installed a new gender-neutral bathroom and new bleachers in our main gym.

The NBMS leadership team is committed to providing students with the world-class educational experience they deserve. We look forward to engaging you in our school improvement work to meet the needs of all students. If you are interested in serving on a parent committee to provide feedback on our school improvement plan, please complete the linked [Google Form](#).

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. I have reminded our staff of the profound impact we have on our students' lives. Together, we are not just educators; we are mentors, guides, and dream-builders. As Henry Adams once said, "Teachers affect eternity; no one can tell where their influence stops." I am confident that because of the support of our caregivers, our amazing students, and our committed and talented staff, NBMS will experience the best school year ever!

Here is a summary of the important information provided in this packet. More detailed information about these topics can be found below my signature.

Agenda Books for Students - Learn about what they are and what to do if your student needs a replacement.

Bus Routes/Student Drop-off/Safety Reminders:

- Bus routes are pending; regular school hours are 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- No supervision is available before 7:45 a.m. or after 3:15 p.m.
- Parents should use the designated drop-off area and follow safety protocols.
- For bus changes, a note and approval are required; contact Randolph Mussotte for bus issues.

Extracurricular Activities (ECA):

- ECA programs are open to all students with no fees, starting in September.
- PTSA also offers fee-based activities.
- Intramural and interscholastic sports are available; registration for athletics starts August 15, 2024.

Cafeteria and Free/Reduced Meals:

- Students qualifying for reduced-price meals will receive meals at no cost.
- Apply online for free/reduced meals at MySchoolApps.com.
- **New application must be submitted each year (see below for link to application)**

Chromebooks and School Supplies:

- 1:1 Chromebook model; students should have Chromebook cases.
- Here is a [link](#) to the School Supply List for 2024-2025; contact the counselor for financial assistance.

Communication Methods

- Weekly News and Notes
- Daily Global Announcements
- ConnectEd Calls.
- Remind
- [NBMS Website](#).
- ParentVUE and myMCPS classroom

Important Dates:

- New Student Orientation: August 22, 2024.
- First Day of School: August 26, 2024.
- Back-To-School Night: August 29, 2024.
- Outdoor Education meeting (6th grade parents): September 3, 2024 on Zoom

Outdoor Environmental Education:

Sixth grade parents will find important information about dates of parent information meetings, what to do if you are interested in being a chaperone, and dates of sessions and who goes to what session!

PTSA

Read a welcome message from the PTSA, and an invitation to a PTSA meeting on Zoom Monday August 12th from 6:30 to 7 pm. Learn more about the PTSA welcome picnic for new 6th grade families and new to NBMS families on 8/22/2024.

SchoolCash Online:

- Preferred method for paying school fees.
- Register at mcpsmd.schoolcashionline.com.

Required vaccinations for rising 7th graders

Resolving Matters of Concern

- Read about the protocol for resolving matters of concern and know who the counselors, content specialists, team leaders, and grade level administrators are

Staffing Changes:

- New staff members include teachers, a psychologist, a security assistant, and more.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. We look forward to a successful and engaging school year. Please enjoy the rest of your summer. I cannot wait to see our students' smiling faces!

Sincerely,



AnneMarie Kestner Smith, Ed.D.
Principal

AKS:kmb

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 which will be distributed the first week of school. 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.

BUS ROUTES AND STUDENT DROP OFF

The department of transportation is finalizing our bus routes. We will send them out as soon as they are available. Our regular school hours for the 2024-2025 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 26th. 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. ***Students should ONLY ride their assigned bus.***

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 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.

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.

CAFETERIA and information on FREE AND REDUCED MEALS

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; this is the preferred application method.

•Apply online NOW at 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. **Please make sure your child has a Chromebook case!**

Here is a [link](#) to the School Supply List for 2024-2025

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.

COMMUNICATION METHODS

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 academic performance and social development. To continue and enhance this valuable engagement, we have several forms of communication:

- **Weekly News and Notes:** Every Sunday, I send a weekly email containing the NBMS News and Notes through Connect-Ed, along with a brief phone message sharing highlights for the week. 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.
- **Remind:** Remind is a messaging platform that will be used to communicate among MCPS schools, teachers, students, and parents. School staff, central office staff, students, and parents will all have Remind accounts to enable them to send and/or receive messages using their preferred mode of communication, such as text message, email, or phone call, and in their preferred language.
- **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 [NBMS Website](#).
- **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 one to access the information relevant to your child's education. To log into ParentVUE and access resources, click this link: [ParentVUE and myMCPS classroom](#).

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (ECA)

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

In addition, the PTSA coordinates fee-based extra curricular activities throughout the year. Please keep your eyes out on the listserv and in my weekly message if you are interested in having your child(ren) participate.

Intramural Sports

These activities are available to all students and take place at different times throughout the school year. In the past, we have offered sports such as soccer, flag football, volleyball, and basketball.

Intramural Coordinator: Mrs. Jessica Gallagher 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. 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.

- Fall registration for coed cross country or boys' and girls' softball opens August 12, 2024, at 12:00 noon.
- Winter registration for boys' or girls' basketball opens October 28, 2024, at 12:00 noon
- Spring registration for boys' or girls' soccer opens January 27, 2025, at 12:00 noon

If you have any questions, please contact our athletic director, Mr. Jordan Baucom, jordan_t_baucom@mcpsmd.org

Mr. Baucom will be hosting a Zoom meeting for families who have 7th and 8th grade students interested in interscholastic sports. More details and date of meeting to come!

IMPORTANT DATES

Grade 6 and New Student Orientation Day: Thursday, August 22, 2024 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 7th and 8th graders new to NBMS will have the opportunity to attend an information session and receive a tour of the school. *New to NBMS 7th and 8th 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. All student schedules are viewable in Student/ParentVue beginning on Wednesday, August 21st.

Welcome picnic for 6th grade families and new to NBMS families - Thursday, August 22, 2024, 6-8 p.m. (more details below in PTSA message)

First Day of School: Monday, August 26, 2024. 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 29, 2024, 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 6:30 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.

Interim and Report Card Dates

MARKING PERIOD	INTERIM GRADES DUE	INTERIM DISTRIBUTION	END OF MARKING PERIOD	REPORT CARD DISTRIBUTION
1	9/27/2024	10/4/2024	11/01/2024	11/13/24
2	12/13/2024	12/20/2024	1/29/2025	2/6/25
3	02/28/2025	03/07/2025	3/31/2025	4/8/25
4	05/02/2025	05/09/2025	6/13/2025	6/25/25

[MCPS COMPREHENSIVE CALENDAR](#)

[Bell Schedules](#)

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

The Outdoor Environmental Education (OEE) program will be one of the most memorable experiences in your student’s middle school career! This school year, the sixth grade class is scheduled to attend Camp Letts in Edgewater, Maryland from Oct. 7 – Oct. 16. Students will attend OEE in ONE of three sessions according to the first letter of their last name. Please note a parent informational meeting on Tuesday, September 3rd at 7pm, please see below for additional details. Due to the early date in the school year, planning has already commenced. To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for our students, we are seeking parent volunteers to assist as chaperones. Your involvement would be greatly appreciated, and it's a wonderful opportunity to share in your child's educational journey. If interested in being one of our parent chaperones, please complete this google survey: <https://forms.gle/eQgwt3K3nsTnqGYr7>

The NBMS OEE leadership team consists of the following individuals working to plan the NBMS OEE program for the 2024-2025 school year:

OEE Coordinator: Olivia Simoncic

6th Grade Team Leaders: Monica Hepburn & Andrea Weisenthal

6th Grade Administrator: Daniel Werbeck

Assigned OEE Session	First Letter of LAST Name
Session 1: Monday, October 7th - Wednesday, October 9th	A M N P S U Y Z
Session 2: Wednesday, October 9 - Friday, October 11th	B E H I K L Q T W
Session 3: Monday, October 14th - Wednesday, October 16th	C D F G J O R V X

***Note: If a student has TWO last names, their session assignment was determined by the one that comes first of the two listed in Student/Parent Vue.**

Other Important OEE Dates	
Thursday, August 29th	Information Packet + Permission Slip Distributed and Reviewed through Science Classes
Tuesday, September 3rd	Parent/Caregiver Information Meeting on Zoom 7 p.m. (Zoom Information will be shared closer to the meeting.)
Monday, September 9th	Parent/Caregiver Chaperone Meeting @ NBMS 7 p.m.

PTSA

At North Bethesda Middle School, we are fortunate to have an active PTSA. Here is a brief message from PTSA President, Eva de Francisco and her wonderful PTSA Board:

Welcome all of you! With your help, we are very excited to support NBMS to make our students more compassionate, more engaged, and more knowledgeable than ever!

Please pay your annual PTSA fees and visit our webpage [here!](#)

See below for details about our upcoming picnic for 6th graders and new students' families **Thursday August 22nd at 6 pm**, and subscribe to the NBMS Google listserv.

This year we have Skate Night in September, and Outdoor Ed and our first 8th grade social in October, so we will be calling an **online PTSA meeting Monday August 12th from 6:30 to 7 pm to pass a temporary budget** until we hold our first regular PTSA meeting the second Tuesday of October. Please see Zoom details below.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://mcpsmd.zoom.us/j/82481329376?pwd=KzdWd1pEKzIyVWw1emtFZjZjdVhNdz09>

Meeting ID: 824 8132 9376

Passcode: 523845

WELCOME PICNIC - AUGUST 22, 2024, 6-8 PM @ NBMS

Dear Parents,

The PTSA would like to invite you to a Welcome Picnic for 6th graders and students new to NBMS on Thursday, August 22 from 6-8 p.m. This is an opportunity for kids and parents from all three feeder elementary schools to meet and connect with each other as you begin your middle school journey at NB. Please come and enjoy Potomac Pizza (with a few gluten free pies for those who need them), Clayboys shaved ice (one per student), and tunes from the fabulous Keith Robinson, aka DJ 8Deep. Parents, we ask that you bring your own blankets, chairs and water bottles. Parents, please sign up for an ADULT [volunteer spot](#). We need adult help with set up, serving pizzas, monitoring Clayboys line, supplying coolers with ice for waters, supervising field games, cleanup, etc. The party can't happen without your help. Seventh and eighth grade students wishing to complete SSL hours please sign up for STUDENT volunteer spots [here](#) and bring your SSL forms to be signed.

We hope that you will come and help us celebrate the beginning of a new school year and a new chapter in your children's lives. This is an outdoor social event (if it rains we will move to the cafeteria), and not a time to tour the school. Parents will have their chance to visit the school building on Back to School Night, Thursday, Aug 29, 2024..

North Bethesda Middle School was named as a Green School in 2022 because of the work we've been doing to address climate change and conservation challenges. In support of these efforts, we're asking guests to bring their own refillable water bottles to use at the picnic. We will have a limited supply of bottled water, but really hope that everyone will come with their own reusable containers. Change starts with us:)

Warmly,
Your PTSA Social Team

REQUIRED VACCINES

All children entering the 7th grade must have received a vaccination known as Tdap (Tetanus, diphtheria acellular pertussis) as well as a MCV4 (Meningococcal meningitis vaccine).

Todos los estudiantes que van al 7mo grado deben haber recibido las vacunas de Tdap (tétanos, difteria y tos ferina (pertussis) y meningitis.

Call your health care provider to discuss if your child has had these vaccines, or schedule an appointment for your child to receive the Tdap and/or meningococcal vaccination.

Provide a copy of your child's updated immunization record to the Health Room at your child's school as soon as possible. Your child will not be allowed in school without these vaccinations next fall.

Reach out to Rona Gregory, school health technician if you have any questions rona_l_gregory@mcpsmd.or

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.

Content	Content Specialist
Arts/PE/Health	Mrs. Emily Valonis
English	Mr. Matthew Ghaman
World Languages/Music	Mrs. Kristy Myers
Math	Ms. Amy Watkins
Science/Technology	Mrs. Maria (Mia) Lutchukov
Social Studies	Mr. Eric Kling
Resource Teacher for Special Education	Mr. Christopher Schauer
Resource Counselor	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

Principal: Dr. AnneMarie Kestner Smith			
GRADE	TEAM LEADERS	COUNSELOR	ADMINISTRATOR
6	Ms. Monica Hepburn Ms. Andrea Weisenthal	A - O (Mrs. Julie Mendelson) P - Z (Mr. David Yeom)	Mr. Daniel Werbeck
7	Mrs. Rachel Lazarick-Ward Mr. Paul Lutchenkov	A - O (Mrs. Ashley Rice) P- Z (Mr. David Yeom)	Mrs. Kathy Rudd
8	Dr. Hyle Daley Mrs. Monica Nicolas	A - O (Mrs. Leslie Mandell*) P - Z (Ms. Jennifer Sadara)	Mrs. Tirza Carmichael-Collins

**Ms. Karbeling's new married name*

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.schoolcashonline.com/>

STAFFING CHANGES

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 2024-2025 school year.

Please welcome the following staff members:

- Ms. Lillian Braun, school psychologist
- Ms. Delmy Canales, building service worker, shift II
- Mr. Ben Busch (part time music)
- Mr. Ryan Junghans (PE/Health)
- Dr. John Leach, Jr. (Science/Digital Photography)
- Mr. Chris Pichola (Math)
- Mr. Chris Schauer (Resource Teacher for Special Education)
- Dr. John Seelke (Math)
- Ms. Kristin Vaeth (PE/Health)
- Ms. Andrea Weisenthal (6th grade Team Leader and English teacher)