



Washington Grove Elementary School

GAITHERSBURG, MD

August 4, 2023

Dear Washington Grove Families,

I cannot believe it is time to welcome everyone back to school. I hope this letter finds you well and are enjoying a restful and relaxing summer. We are so excited for the 2023 - 2024 school year. We are thrilled to welcome our new Washington Grove students and their families to our first year of learning together. And, of course, we cannot wait to see our returning students and families.

Washington Grove is **PROUD** to be a **DUAL LANGUAGE** school. MCPS staff have been working with school teams to align the organizational structures and practices across the 6 Dual Language schools. Some aspects of our program will change, including focused instruction of each content in one language. What will not change is that students in grades K – 5 and two sections of Pre-K will spend half their day learning in Spanish and half their day learning English. Students will continue to receive literacy instruction in both languages daily. The three pillars of Dual Language Education remain as a guide for our work.

Tres Pilares de Educación de Lenguaje Dual Three Pillars of Dual Language Education



Washington Grove Elementary School - A Proud Dual Language School
Escuela Primaria Washington Grove - Una Escuela Orgullosamente Bilingüe

Washington Grove es una comunidad de ciudadanos globales quienes se respetan los unos a los otros, se esfuerzan por tener éxito y resuelven problemas juntos in two languages.

Washington Grove is a community of global citizens who respect one another, strive for success and solve problems together en dos idiomas.

We are working as a school team to implement these new changes and will share more information during Back-to-School Night. Please know that we continue to be dedicated to student and staff success.

This year's Back-to-School Night will be on Thursday, August 24th, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. A 5th-grade patrol meeting will start at 5:30 p.m. in the cafeteria. More details will be forthcoming, but please "Save the Date" on your calendars.

School attendance is essential for student learning. Students who miss even two days of school a month miss over 10% of overall instruction. Please make attendance at school a priority for your child and family. If you need help with this, please reach out to Sra. Hernández, Sra. Guardado or myself.

Our school hours are 9:25 a.m. – 3:50 p.m. Students should arrive at school at 9:10 a.m. That is when we open the doors and welcome your children to school daily. **For the safety of your children, do not drop them off at school before 9:10 a.m. because there is NO adult supervision.**

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will provide free breakfast and lunch at Washington Grove in the 2023–2024 school year. Households do NOT need to complete Free And Reduced-price Meal (FARMS) applications in order to receive free meal benefits at our school*. We encourage students to enjoy breakfast and lunch at school; please check out the menus [here](#). *Households with students at other MCPS schools should check directly with those schools to determine if a FARM application is needed.

Summer is always a time of change; with that change comes staffing updates. I am very excited about the team we have collaboratively built to work with our students this year. They are a group of dynamic, student-focused, and passionate educators ready to create an amazing chapter in the lives of our students. They are eager to continue our commitment to high standards of academic excellence and a strong emphasis on developing students who see themselves as learners and recognize the good in themselves and others. I know you will join me in welcoming our new Washington Grove Cougars to the family. You will be able to welcome them personally at Back-to-School Night.

Washington Grove Position	Staff Name
Counselor	Kate (Katherine) Guardado
PEP Teacher	Dara Steichen
Kindergarten	Vivian Salazar
ESOL .2	Natalia Barber
Paraeducator	Melanie Josselin Manoel
PPW	Phillip Lynch

Washington Grove Position	Staff Name
Special Education and English Intervention	Julie Schnabel
PEP Teacher	Rachel Goldman
Paraeducator	Shadeja Fuentes
Paraeducator	Maria Esther Veizaga Barrionuevo
Parent Community Coordinator	Maribel De La Cruz

We are also excited to announce new opportunities for some of our staff within WGES.

New Washington Grove Position	Staff Name
Second Grade Spanish	Suaimeliz Piñero Saez
First Grade English	Diana Hagan
Staff Development Teacher	Judith Cobián
Dual Language Enrichment Coach	Deirdre Beet

We will continue to build our cultural proficiency and anti-racist practices to create welcoming and engaging classroom environments for all students. By focusing on these areas, we will provide your children with a quality instructional program in a school climate that promotes high expectations for all students. As we shared in May, based on our anti-racist audit data, we will:

- Create opportunities in instruction for students to ask questions.
- Continue to consciously bring culturally responsive instructional material and approaches that reflect our student’s cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds.
- Continue professional development for staff around Anti-Racism.
- Provide opportunities for students and parents to share what they are thinking and who they are through:
 - Student Focus Groups
 - Student/Staff Voice Surveys
 - Listening Sessions to get suggestions from parents for race and culture.

Together we will continue making Washington Grove a community of global citizens who respect one another, strive for success, and solve problems together en dos idiomas.

Our Leadership Team met this summer to define our instructional focus for the 2023 - 2024 school year. We worked together to discuss how to support our students best academically and emotionally. After reviewing students' data, we have decided to focus on writing across the curriculum to support our multilingual students' language development in English and Spanish. We are committed to delivering high-quality first instruction, planning collaboratively, and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students.

Once again, I want to express my enthusiasm for the 2023-2024 school year. When we work TOGETHER, students succeed. I look forward to partnering with you and the dedicated staff at Washington Grove to ensure that ALL Washington Grove Cougars achieve success. **TOGETHER WE THRIVE EN DOS IDIOMAS.**

Sincerely,

Dr. Alonso

Dr. Amy J. Alonso
Principal

Key Information

Homeroom Assignments

We will post your child's homeroom assignments for the 2023-2024 school year outside of school on Wednesday, August 23, 2023.

Patrol Meeting

A patrol meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 24, 2023, in the cafeteria. All grade 5 students who will serve as Washington Grove patrols are required to attend this important informational meeting.

Students Arriving Late

Students who arrive in the school building after 9:25 a.m. are marked tardy. Students who arrive late must go directly to the office, sign in, and receive a late pass. Each late arrival counts as a tardy.

Dropping Off and Picking Up Students

Students being dropped off in the Kiss & Learn area MUST exit their cars using the passenger side door. Adults in the car should remain inside the car in this area. Cars may not be left unattended. If you would like to walk your student to the doors, please park your car on Oakmont Street and walk them down.

Picking Up Your Child Early From School

In order to ensure continuity and avoid/minimize disruptions during the instructional day, parents should avoid picking up students before 3:50 p.m. If you need to pick up your child before the end of the school day, please do so by 3:30 p.m.

Bus schedules are being finalized and will be sent separately.

Changes in Transportation or Location

It is important for the safety of students that we are notified if your child's arrival or dismissal plan changes. Students **ARE REQUIRED** to bring a note indicating the change (For example, "Maria Gonzalez will go to S.O.A.R. after school today, Monday, September 15th. Sincerely, Mrs. Gonzalez"). Your signature is always required for this change. Any changes that are emailed must be sent to the classroom teacher and the main office (Monica_M_Benitez@mcpsmd.org and Michelle_A_Robey@mcpsmd.org).

Student Item Drop Off

Students need to be prepared with their materials each day. If you need to drop off your child's items, please leave them with Ms. Monica Benitez in the main office. She will make sure that the materials are given to your child.

Updating Emergency Information - SYNERGY

Please be sure to update your family's information on SYNERGY by the end of the second week of school. Ensure that you provide emergency contact information (including names, phone and email) for those people who are authorized to pick up your child in case you are unable. **Children will not be released to any adult whose name does not appear in Synergy. Please remind them to bring a picture ID with them to match.** If you need help with this task, please reach out to Sra. Benitez or Sra. De La Cruz.

Birthdays

Families can send in a small store-bought birthday treat for each class member to help celebrate their student. Balloons, goodie bags, juice, and pizza parties are not allowed. Treats will be handed out during student lunch

in grades K - 5 and within the classroom for Pre-K and PEP. Birthday invitations will not be handed out unless all students in a classroom are invited.

Lunch and Recess Schedule

Grade	Recess	Lunch
Kindergarten	1:25 – 2:00 p.m.	12:50 - 1:25 p.m.
Grade 1	12:50 - 1:25 p.m.	1:25 – 2:00 p.m.
Grade 2	11:30 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.	12:05 – 12:40 p.m.
Grade 3	12:05 – 12:40 p.m.	11:30 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.
Grade 4	12:50 - 1:25 p.m.	1:25 – 2:00 p.m.
Grade 5	1:25 – 2:00 p.m.	12:50 - 1:25 p.m.

School Supplies (LIST)

Students are expected to come to school ready to learn. You may consider securing individual supplies for your student. Supply lists for each grade level are posted on our website and are accompanying this letter.

Parent Volunteers

We are extremely proud of Washington Grove and hope our parents will participate actively in our school community. We welcome and invite any parent who wishes to volunteer in the classrooms at lunch and recess. We will be hosting required Volunteer Orientations for ALL parents and community members who want to volunteer this year. More information for getting involved and the dates of those orientations are forthcoming. Don't hesitate to contact Sra. Sara Orellana if you have any questions.

S.O.A.R.

S.O.A.R. is the before and after school childcare provider that is housed in the all-purpose room. Morning daycare hours are 7:00 – 9:10 a.m., and evening daycare hours are 3:50- 6:30 p.m. Please contact S.O.A.R by phone at 240-702-3391 or email WashingtonGrove@soarchildcare.com if you are interested in childcare.