



Panther Prints



Sparrows Point Middle School

September 1-October 31, 2009

Principal: Mr. Don Weglein

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Dwan Pinamonti

Assistant Principal: Mr. David Ligé

Parents and Students: Please note the newly revised calendar included in this edition. This updated version includes MSA testing dates!

Principal's Corner

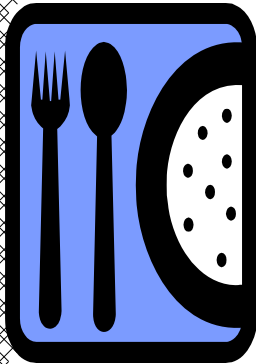
I would like to have as many parents join us for our "Back to School Night" on Wednesday, September 9th at 7 PM. Parents will have the opportunity to visit classes, meet teachers, and to learn about our curriculum and classroom expectations. Visiting school is an excellent way to demonstrate to children your interest in their education.

Get to the Point!

Please stress the importance of regular school attendance with your children. Our success is built on improved attendance and the commitment on the part of our faculty, parents, and students to continue our emergence as a top ten middle school. This year, our school secretaries will be making personal phone calls when students miss school. Attendance is the key to school success!

New BCPS Attendance Policy

A student is counted present for a full day if the student is in attendance for four hours or more of the school day. A student is counted present for 1/2 day if in attendance for at least two hours of the school day, but less than four hours.



Peanut/Tree-Nut Allergies

In compliance with Maryland law, our school will designate a peanut and tree-nut free table in the cafeteria for use by students with medically documented allergies. If your child has such an allergy and you would like to request this accommodation, please notify the school nurse at 410-887-7542.

Other Cafeteria News

This year, a student breakfast will cost each student \$1.55 per meal. A student lunch will cost \$2.60. Middle school students must use a PIN ID# or card to make any purchase from the café. Even if they are paying cash for a .50 item. Students receive their

PIN ID letters in homerooms on the first day of school.

When a student needs to add more money to his or her account, they can give a check or cash to the cafeteria worker at any register in the café or they can give the money directly to Ms. Gail Bittner, the cafeteria manager.

FUTURE EVENTS

September

- 7 Mon. Labor Day – Schools and Offices Closed
- 9 Wed. Back to School Night – Auditorium 7:00 PM
6:15 PTSA Meeting-Library
- 14 Mon. SE Area Advisory Council-7 PM-Patapsco HS
- 28 Mon. Yom Kippur-Schools and Offices Closed



October

- 2 Fri. Interims Distributed
- 6 Tue. Fall Picture Day
- 7 Wed. Conference Night 4:30-6:30
- 12 Mon. SE Area Advisory Council
Sollers Point High at 7:00 PM
- 12 Mon. Columbus Day (schools open)
- 13 Tue. 6th Grade Genesee Valley Trip
- 14 Wed. PTSA Meeting 6:15 PM
Library
- 16 Fri. MSTA Convention -Schools
Closed for Students

November

- 5 Thurs. First Marking Period Ends
- 6 Fri. Assessment Day for Elem/Middle
Schools Closed for Students
- 9 Mon. SE Area Advisory Council-Sparrows
Point Middle School at 7:00 PM
Picture make-up day
- 11 Wed. Veteran's Day (schools open)
- 11 Wed. PTSA Meeting 6:15 PM - Library
- 16-20 Mon.-Fri. American Education Week
17-6th Grade Visit Day
18-7th Grade Visit Day
19-8th Grade Visit Day
- 19 Thur. Dist. of 1st QTR. Report Cards
- 24 Tue. 1st QTR. Honor Roll Assembly
Auditorium-1PM
- 25 Wed. Turkey Trot – PE Classes
- 26 Thurs. Schools and Offices Closed for
Thanksgiving
- 27 Fri. Schools and Offices Closed for
Thanksgiving
- 30 Mon. Magnet School Applications
Due

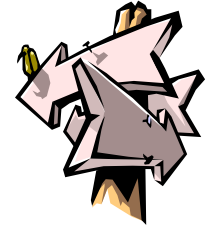
The Mission of Sparrows Point Middle School

The mission of Sparrows Point Middle School is to effectively guide the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical well being of students while developing skills needed to continue their education and to become productive members of society.



School Counseling Information

Grade 6 – Ms. Montgomery
Grades 7&8 - Ms. Weinstein



ATTENTION 8th GRADE PARENTS

High school is just around the corner. Did you know that SPMS students can apply to the following magnet high schools - Carver Center for the Arts, Chesapeake High Academy for Leadership in Business, Arts, and Science, Eastern Technical High School, Kenwood IB Program, Kenwood Sports Science Program, Overlea Academy of Finance, Parkville Center for Mathematics, Science, and Computer Science, Patapsco High and Center for the Arts, Sollers Point Technical High, Sparrows Point Environmental Studies Program (SPECIES) and Towson High Law and Public Policy Program.



Each school offers different programs and has different admissions requirements. Some things to begin thinking about are: do I want my child to attend my neighborhood school, do I want my child to attend a school that specializes in his / her interests, do I want my child to attend college?



Throughout September and October, eighth graders will receive information and hear from various representatives of some of the above magnet schools. In the mean time, if you have questions feel free to contact the 8th grader counselor, Susan Weinstein at 887-7510 or sweinstein@bcps.org. The application deadline is November 30th!

Back to School Night



Back to School Night has been scheduled for all grade levels on **Wednesday, September 9th, 2009, at 7 PM.** This event begins in the auditorium. There will be a short introduction from the administration and the PTSA. Then, parents and students will have an opportunity to tour the building, to meet our teachers, and to become familiar with the academic expectations of Sparrows Point Middle School and the County's Blue Print for Progress. Not only is this a very special night, but it is an excellent way for parents to demonstrate the importance of education in their child's life and to experience a typical academic day for their child.

Collect Those Box Tops!

Don't forget to send in the Box Tops for Education, Campbell Soup Labels, and your empty printer ink cartridges; send them into the Middle School office with your student. Thank you.



Bullying

Bullying is a national concern as well as a local one. Sparrows Point Middle School is intent on being proactive in addressing bullying. Listed below are supports for students who feel they are being bullied:



- School Mediation
- Peer Mediation
- Administrative Intervention

Please, encourage your child support from the school counselor or any adult in the school if he/she feels bullied. Please, also feel free to call the school counselor or any school administrator for information and support. We are very proud of our students at Sparrows Point Middle School and make character education a top priority. In fact our constant efforts to promote the development of positive character traits were recognized by the State of Maryland with a special award. Sparrows Point Middle School does not want the behavior of a few students to interfere with the learning of others. Again, contact our school's guidance counselors or administrators if bullying is an issue for your son or daughter.



CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS-RELEASE OF INFORMATION

As a school system serving the educational needs of young people and their families, we are often asked for information regarding these students. With regard to the release of student information, we would like to advise you that, as a result of federal and state legislation and our concerns for maintaining privacy of student information, all records maintained by the Baltimore County Public Schools are available for review by parents and eligible students, and that, with few exceptions, information relative to a student cannot be released without prior consent of the parent or eligible student to anyone outside of educational agencies. Following a review of records with the appropriate school authorities, parents have the right to challenge items included in the records and to place appropriate comments in the records if they deem it necessary.

Student's information which does not require prior consent and is disclosed on request is called "Directory Information." This would include the student's name and address, date of birth, grade placement, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, and diplomas and honors received. All parents and students are advised that those items listed as "Directory Information" may be withheld at the request of the parent, guardian or eligible student. This request must be submitted in writing to the school principal no later than November 1 of the current school year.

Morning Drop-Off and Afternoon Pick-Up Patterns



Attention! If you drop off or pick up your middle schooler before or after school, please note the traffic patterns. This year we are asking that parents turn on Main Street by the High's convenience store and loop around through the faculty parking lot beside the auditorium. The faculty parking lot is ONE-WAY. Do **NOT** cut into the parking lot at the auditorium. Stop your car beside the auditorium and safely drop off/pick-up your son or daughter. **No cars will be allowed to pass through the front loop between the hours of 7:30-8:00 AM or between 2:00-3:00 PM.** A teacher will be on duty to assist with the traffic pattern during the morning and afternoon bus times.

Visitors



In our new era of heightened security and as a measure to ensure the safety of our students and staff, it is important that we are aware of every individual who enters our building. For this reason, if you are visiting school for any reason, then please register with the secretaries in either the middle or high school offices. We appreciate your cooperation with this process, but realize you share our same concerns about safety. This is especially important as we undergo our construction project.

MyEdgemere.com

An excellent resource for gaining information about our community, including PTSA news, is the MyEdgemere web site. You can get information about schools and a variety of community events by logging onto myedgemere.com and linking to the site of interest.



Office Messages

In an effort to limit the number of interruptions caused by relaying personal information to students and cutting into valuable instructional time, we are asking parents to double check the following with your middle schooler each day:

- lunch/lunch money?
- gym suit?
- absentee/lateness note?
- required permission forms?
- after-school responsibilities?
- knowledge about after-school care and the specific time and place a student is to report after the school day?
- other family responsibilities?



Bonus Bucks

Several area stores have bonus dollar programs that provide for a portion of your purchases to go toward school funds for books and other materials. This year SPMS received several hundred dollars from area stores as part of these programs. Make sure you sign up for these at your local stores, supply store.

Science Department News!

The Science Department would like to welcome back all of our young scientists!! We look forward to spending the year exploring and investigating the Wonderful World of Science. This year, we welcome Ms. Smith to our department. Ms. Smith is teaching 6th grade science and will be a wonderful addition to our team of excellent science teachers.

Our new mini-computer lab will be up and running very soon. The lab will enable our students to use technology to collect and measure data such as temperature, magnetic strength, light intensity and variables related to motion. Students will have the capability to conduct research, observe models and access interactive simulations using the internet.

Additionally, we have received brand new Prentice-Hall Science Explorer textbooks. The new textbooks have many new features to enhance the Baltimore County Curriculum.

This summer Ms. Fox attended Space Camp for teachers in Huntsville, Alabama. The program, sponsored and funded by Honeywell, provides exciting science, technology, engineering and math-ematic activities to incorporate into the classroom. Ms. Fox also participated in several simulations including Space Shuttle launches and parachute rescues. Excellent Job Commander Fox!

We are looking forward to a great year because, in the words of Mr. Grissom, "Science is life!"

Feel free to contact us at anytime if you have any questions!

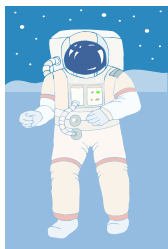
Mrs. Bodis, Department Chair 8th grade and 8th grade GT

Ms. Fox ,6th grade and 6th grade GT

Mr. Grissom, 7th grade and 8th grade

Mrs. Norris, 7th grade and 7th grade GT

Ms. Smith, 6th grade



6th Grade Team's Frequently Asked Questions

Here are the answers to the most FAQ's!

How do I get in touch with my child's teachers?

- Call the school at 410-887-7524 and leave a message.
- Email addresses are on the school website.

How will I know what my child has for homework? Parents are asked to look at and sign the Student Planner every night.

- Every 6th grader is **required** to have a Homework folder.
- All homework assignments should be placed in this one folder.

How will I know how my child is progressing in his/her classes?

- Teachers can provide a grade update at any time through the quarter at your request. Many parents have done that in the past via email. But a request in writing is just as good.
- Interim Reports come out about four weeks into each quarter.
- Reports Cards come out every quarter.

How can I best help my child?

- Check and sign the Student Planner every day.
- Ask to see the Homework Folder every day.
- Provide a quiet, distraction-free place where homework can be done.
- Help sort papers that are loose in the binder.
- Make sure your child has all the required school supplies.
- Make sure the rings on your child's binder are working properly.

See you on Back to School Night, Sept. 9th at 7 pm.

¡Bienvenidos a la clase de español!

Señora Breiningand Señora Durham are excited to start the new year. Students will be surprised at their growth throughout the year.

All Spanish students should have a pack of dry erase markers in addition to other school supplies. Señora Breining's students should also have a package of wet wipes.

We look forward to a successful year for all!

Next Panther Press Issue.

Our next newsletter will be published on November 1st. For your convenience, an on-line version may be accessed on our school website at (www.bcps.org). Choose Sparrows Point Middle School from the list.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION NEWS

Welcome to a new school year! The physical education department is looking forward to a fun and active year together. Mr. Burnham and Mrs. Ryan will once again lead our physical education program. Our program consists of developmentally appropriate activities that create maximum opportunities for development of skill, knowledge, health-related fitness, and ultimately, the confidence to enjoy an active, healthy lifestyle.

The SPMS physical education uniform is required for class participation. Uniforms may be purchased for \$23.00. By now, parents should have read and signed our department's policies and procedures letter. If you have not, please take time to review this with your child, sign it, and return it to their P.E. teacher.



Athletic Shoes are needed to be successful in physical education. If students do not wear their athletic shoes to school then they need to remember to bring the shoes to school on P.E. days. Another option would be to keep the athletic shoes or a spare pair in their phys. ed. locker.

INTRAMURALS

Mr. Burnham will be offering Weight Training after school two times a week from December through March. Students should see Mr. Burnham for more information.

Mrs. Ryan will be holding intramurals once a week throughout the school year. Activities will change every 3-4 weeks. Students interested in staying after for intramurals should see Mrs. Ryan for a permission form and specific information.

Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications



As parents, we know that everything seems to cost more these days. We all enjoy any available opportunity to lower our household costs. Many children throughout the country are eligible to receive breakfast and lunch at free or at greatly reduced prices. Like many of our nation's schools, our school program offers a way to ensure that all of our students are "fueled" nutritiously for the day, including a Free and Reduced Price Meal

Program that eliminates entirely or substantially reduces the price of each meal for families who qualify. The application form and eligibility chart will be sent home with students on the first day of school to help parents and guardians determine if this program is right for their children's needs.

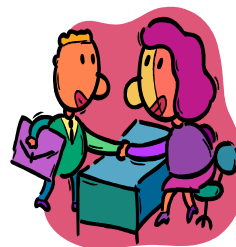
Please, take time to read this information carefully to determine if your child qualifies for this benefit and return the completed form in an envelope with your son or daughter. All information is confidential.

8th Grade Team News

Welcome 8th grade parents to the 2009-10 school year. The 8th grade team and you have a common goal and that is to provide your child with the support he/she needs to maximize his/her academic potential. Communication between parents and teachers is the key to meeting the needs of your child. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the 8th grade team members if you have a question or concern. All of our email addresses are listed on the school website.

Please Update Your Information

Throughout the school year, families move, get new cell phones, internet service providers, etc. If your contact information changes, please be sure you update the main office and your child's grade level team leader.



Grade Level Team Leaders

Grade 6 Team Leader: Ms. Lowers
Grade 7 Team Leader: Mr. Brucker
Grade 8 Team Leader: Mr. Stoe



Club News!



Quiz Bowl Team

If you like current events, Quiz Bowl is for you! Last year, Sparrows Point placed second in the Baltimore County Championship. A few openings are available for competitive-minded students. Quiz Bowl meets every Wednesday afternoon until 3:30 pm. See Mr. Stoe for details in room 214.

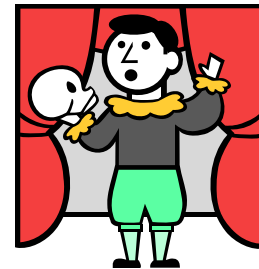


Chess Club

Mr. Stoe is looking for any 6th, 7th, or 8th grader interested in learning how to play chess. Absolutely no experience is necessary. Chess club meets every Thursday in room 214 and plays until 4 pm. Just be sure to arrange a ride home for your self. Hope to see you soon.

Student Newspaper

The Wild Panther student newspaper staff will meet this year again on Tuesdays after school. Students should listen to the morning announcements for more information on sign ups. If you have questions, contact Ms. Weinstein at 410.887.7525 or sweinstein@bcps.org.



Shakespeare Club

Continuing our grand tradition, the SPMS Shakespeare Club will be performing another timeless classic by the world's greatest playwright. Auditions will be held Wednesday, September 23 in Ms. Bonning's Room - 223. The as-yet-to-be-determined play will be performed Friday, May 14. Interested students should see Ms. Bonning or Ms Weinstein for more information. Information will also be given during the morning announcements.