

James McHenry Elementary School

Thomas Rivers, Principal | thomas.rivers@pgcps.org
8909 McHenry Lane | Lanham, MD 20706 | (301) 918-8760 |
www.pgcps.org/jamesmchenry

August 7, 2024

Dear James McHenry Elementary Families,

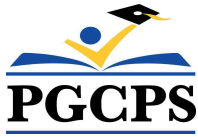
Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! As you are winding down your summer vacation, I hope you are relaxed and recharged as you prepare for the start of a new school year. I am so delighted that you are part of our amazing learning community. As we prepare to embark on the 2024-2025 school year, I am thrilled to welcome you back to what promises to be an exciting and fulfilling year for our students, staff, and community.

The staff at James McHenry Elementary School is looking forward to another exciting year. I hope the start of this year finds you positive, energized, and ready to take on the many exciting opportunities and new learning that comes your way! Our staff will continue to provide a learning community that empowers our students to be successful members of our diverse community. Parents and students, I would like to thank you for your diligence, patience, and support as we navigated through the impact the pandemic had on our school community.

Our school theme this year is **“Embracing New Adventures! Together we can Imagine, Believe, and Achieve!”** This theme reflects our commitment to fostering a dynamic and supportive learning environment where every student can thrive. We believe that by embracing new challenges and opportunities, our students will continue to grow and excel academically.

This year, our focus is on helping our students reach new heights in their academic journey. We are dedicated to providing high-quality instruction, engaging learning experiences, and a nurturing environment that encourages curiosity and creativity. Our talented and dedicated staff will work collaboratively to support each student's individual needs and aspirations.

As we embark on this new adventure together, we encourage you to be active participants in your child's education. Your involvement and support are crucial to their success. We look forward to partnering with you to create a positive and enriching experience for all our students. Our work must focus on improving every students' academic success by strengthening our individual and collective instructional practices throughout our learning community. This will serve as our focus.



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As part of Superintendent House's charge, we will prioritize the following:

1. School Climate + Culture;
2. Accelerating Achievement in Mathematics; and
3. Social Emotional Learning + Mental Health

Please mark your calendars for our upcoming Back-to-School Night, where you will have the opportunity to meet your child's teachers, learn about the exciting programs and initiatives we have planned, and discover ways to get involved in our school community.

Thank you for your continued support and trust. Let's work together to imagine, believe, and achieve great things this school year!

With Cougar Pride,

Mr. Rivers, Principal

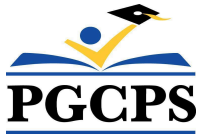
Parent Information

Staffing Updates

I am pleased to announce the newest members to the James McHenry Family, please welcome the following staff members: Assistant Principal: Patricia Twitty, Reading Resource: Jennifer James, Pre Kindergarten: Dr. Vandela Haynes, Second Grade: Marquis Bailey, English Language Development Teachers: Arlene Nuesca, Andrea Oliver, Shyueh-Chien Cheng, Shawn Anderson, and Jane Birnbaum Paraprofessional: London Lloyd, and Dedicated Aide: Collette Hawkins. They are wonderful additions to our school community! Within the coming weeks, great strides will be made to fill vacancies for the following: Primary Reading Resource and Special Education Teacher.

Immunizations

All students must have up-to-date immunizations on file with the school to return. If immunizations are not up to date your child will not be allowed to attend school. Back-to-School Immunizations are provided by the Prince George's County Health Department [link](#). Should you have questions regarding your child's immunization record, please contact the Health Services at 301-749-4722 or by email at health.services@pgcps.org.



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School Office Hours

The school office hours are from 7:15 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. If you are in need of assistance you must schedule an appointment for support. To schedule an appointment please call (301)918-8760 or email Mrs. Terry Shirley at terry.shirley@pgcps.org. Per PGCPS policy, all visitors must ring the doorbell and show their identification to the camera to gain access into the school building. Visitors will not be allowed in the building if an appointment is not scheduled.

School Hours

It is essential that students arrive at school on time each day to engage in instruction. School promptly begins at 7:30 a.m. and ends at 1:40 p.m. Students will be allowed to enter the building at 7:15 am. Before that time, there is no adult supervision for students. To receive the full benefit of the instructional program it is important to be present and on time every day. Classroom Schedules will be provided specific to respective classes during Orientation and Back-to-School Night sessions.

Afternoon Dismissal

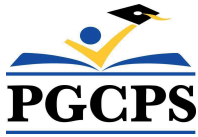
It is important that the dismissal process be as smooth as possible. As such, the early dismissal cut-off is at 1:00 p.m. Following 1:00 p.m. parents must wait for their children to be dismissed at the regular time of 1:40 p.m. Emergency exceptions will be considered. Ensuring the safety of our students is a top priority and it is imperative that we know the intended dismissal procedure for each student. Dismissal information will be shared during orientation and Back-to-School Night sessions.

Early Dismissal

There is NO early dismissal after 1:00 pm. There will be no exceptions, so please make appointments before this time or after the 1:45 pm bell. If your child needs to leave early before 1:00 pm, please send a note to school so that the teacher can prepare them for early dismissal. Also, for safety reasons every person must show an ID at the door. This will alleviate your wait time.

Class Assignments

It is kindly asked that parents/guardians model positive actions when sharing class assignments with their children. The determination of student class assignments are a result of an intentional and thoughtful process, hence; changes to class lists are not made once released.



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During the dates of [Monday, August 19](#) and [Friday, August 23](#), teachers will extend communication to the families of their students to welcome them to the start of a new school year. Parents can also check your child's assigned teacher using [Parent Vue](#). Classroom assignments will also be available at our JMES Community Day on Saturday, August 24, 2024 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Parent Vue

Beginning with the 2024-25 school year, Synergy will replace SchoolMAX as the student information system for Prince George's County Public Schools. Families will now use ParentVUE, in place of Family Portal, to access important information about their students. ParentVUE is the portal that allows parents and guardians to view information about their student, including classroom assignments and scores, attendance, transcripts, graduation status and more. In ParentVUE, families can also update their phone numbers and emergency contact information and access the Online Registration (OLR) Application. **All report cards will only be accessible through Parent Vue. Only the 4th quarter report card printed and mailed home. Register Here: [Parent Vue](#)**

School Meals

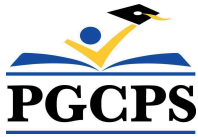
The federal waiver that provided free lunch for all students during the Pandemic has expired. Breakfast will remain FREE for all students. The cost for lunch is now \$3, however; there is no cost to students who are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Meals. All families are encouraged to APPLY each year for Free and Reduced Price Meals by visiting [Apply for Free and Reduced Priced Meals](#). If you need assistance completing this form please contact Jessica Mayers-Williams (jess.mayerswilliams@pgcps.org) at (301-918-8760) to schedule an appointment.

SURVEY COMPLETION IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT. Responses also determine eligibility for school funding.

To apply you will need:

- the name, school, and grade of your school-age children;
- the names of all adults living in the home;
- income information for all adults living in the home; and
- student ID numbers for your school-age children.

MySchoolBucks is an online payment service through which parents can securely pay for meals and monitor student cafeteria purchases. Meal payments can be made online by visiting: <https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/getmain?requestAction=home>.



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View lunch menus by visiting:

<https://schools.mealviewer.com/district/princegeorgescounty>.

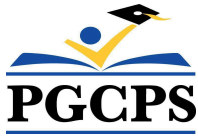
Emergency Contact Form

Emergency Contact forms will be sent home with students on the first day of school. It is important that you complete the form to its entirety with correct information and contact numbers. After completing the form please return to your child's teacher.

Parent Communication

At James McHenry Elementary School, we value Parents as our Partners and prioritize keeping all informed. As such, the following platforms will be utilized to communicate with families; Google Classroom, Class Dojo, Email, School Website, School Messenger, and Twitter:

- [Class Dojo](#)
Class Dojo is a platform that allows educators to communicate with families remotely, through the sharing of photos, videos, and messages. The school Class Dojo account houses an account for all teachers and enables the school community to remain connected. Teachers will provide invitations for parents to join. It is important that all parents join Class Dojo.
- [Email](#)
Emails will be shared with families throughout the course of the school year as a means to ensure that all remain informed.
- [SchoolMessenger](#)
School Messenger is replacing GovDelivery, which was the notification system previously used to send PGCPS emails, text messages, and newsletters. To sign up to receive messages from PGCPS please click [here](#) or visit: <https://www.pgcps.org/offices/newsroom/schoolmessenger>.
- [X](#)
Twitter is a social networking service. It is highly encouraged for parents to subscribe to Twitter as a way to receive district-wide and school-wide updates. Follow us [@JMESCougarPRIDE](#) on X.
- [2024-2025 Student Publicity Release Form | James McHenry](#)
Throughout the school year, activities will be conducted that may be publicized by local or national news media or used to promote the school system. To obtain permission from parents/guardians to capture their student(s) name, voice, photographic likeness and student



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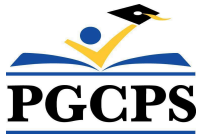
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work to be used by the school and/or Board of Education, supply the form template to your families.

Please complete the Student Publicity Form [Click Here](#).

Important Dates

| Event | Date | Time |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| JMES Community Day Join us for Food, Fellowship, and Fun. We will also provide backpacks and supplies for our students | Saturday, August 24, 2024 | 9:00 am to 1:00 pm |
| Mock Day/Orientation (In-Person) (Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten) | Friday, August 23, 2024 | Pre K 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. Kindergarten 9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. |
| <i>Supply Drop Off "Greet and Go" Visit</i> JMES Cougars are invited to the school to meet their teachers and drop off school supplies. This event is only for James McHenry Elementary students and parents. Though we love siblings, it is kindly requested that they remain home out of request of adhering to safety protocols. | | |
| Supply Drop Off "Greet & Go" Visit | Friday, August 23, 2024 | 1st - 2nd Grade 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. 3rd - 5th Grade 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. |
| First Day of School | Monday, August 26th | All Day |
| Back to School Night (Primary Students - Grades PK - 2) | Tuesday, September 17th | 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. |
| Back to School Night (Intermediate Students - Grades 3 - 5) | Thursday, September 19th | 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. |



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| Schools and Offices Closed Labor Day | September 2nd | All Day |
| Professional Development for Teachers | September 16th | All Day |
| Teacher Planning 3 Hour Early Dismissal | September 27th | 3 Hour Early Dismissal |
| Parent Teacher Conferences | October 7th | All Day |
| Professional Development Schools Closed for Students | October 18th | All Day |
| End of First Quarter | October 31th | |