## **School Talk**

## **October 19, 2018**

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**…AND THE NOMINEES ARE….**

The Montessori Naming Committee met on Wednesday, October 17th to review the names that were submitted from the public, as well as go over our own choices and we have narrowed it down to the following 5 choices (listed in no particular order of preference):

1. **Monarch Montessori School:** Chosen because the monarch butterfly symbolizes nature and a focus on the development of the whole child.
2. **Kathryn Stone Montessori:** The Hon. Kathryn H. Stone served in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1954-66. She was a woman of vision who lobbied to unite programs at Drew, promoted the Peace Walk and advocated for mental health resources.
3. **Arlington County Montessori School**\*
4. **Montessori School of Arlington County**\*
5. **Arlington Public Montessori School**\*

\**Various iterations of names convey “County” or “Public” because this will be the first stand-alone public Montessori in the state of Virginia.*

You will be receiving a survey from APS that will ask you to pick the one name that stands out to you as the right choice. Then the naming committee will reconvene to go over the survey results and come up with a recommendation to present to the School Board at the December 6 School Board meeting.

**PROGRAM NEWS**

**Celebrate Your School Bus Driver and Attendant!** Next week is **National School Bus Safety Week**, and **Wednesday, October 24th**, is **APS School Bus Transport Employee Appreciation Day**. School bus transportation plays a significant role each day in the academic instruction to over 17,500 Arlington Public School students. School bus transportation employees are the direct link between neighborhoods and classrooms. This dedicated week serves as a reminder to students, school administrators, parents and the community to keep school bus safety at the forefront. An excellent way to promote National School Bus Safety week and Employee Appreciation is to have students make cards, posters, and signage addressing the importance of school bus safety and thanking their driver and/or attendant for safely transporting them to and from school.

**Extended Day Student Gallery** Come visit the Drew Extended Day Program’s Student Gallery! Parents are cordially invited to attend a gallery of student works and creations being hosted by the Extended Day program at Drew. **Thursday, October 25th** beginning at 4PM. Come see art work, participate in our STEM workshop, take fun pics in a super cool phot booth, paint pumpkins and more! See Mr. Manny or Ms. Tenita with any questions or e-mail drew.extendedday@apsva.us. This is a *Lights on Afterschool Event*.

**Free Flu Shots for All APS Students!** This year, Arlington Public Schools is partnering with Healthy Schools, the nation’s largest school vaccine provider, to offer flu shots to all APS students during the school day. Our goal is to keep all our students healthy and to help fight the flu this season by ensuring that flu shots are available to 100% of APS students. **The copay is $0, so there is no cost to families.**

The date for our program’s flu shot clinic: Monday, November 26th beginning at 9:30AM

The Healthy Schools flu shot clinics will be staffed by qualified nurses who have been trained to care for kids. The nurses are often local to our community and may even be an APS parent! Any questions, please contact the school nurse at 703-228-8128.

**REMINDERS**

**Parent-Teacher Conferences take place on Thursday, October 25th – Friday, October 26th.** Your child’s teacher should have scheduled a conference with you. We encourage all parents to attend a conference so we can work together in creating the best educational experience for your child. Translators will be provided if requested. Thursday will be an early release day. Friday there will be no school for students.

**Gifted Services Information Night, October 29th -** Do you know the process APS follows for identifying gifted children? Do you know what happens once your child is identified? Do you know the role of the gifted resource teacher? All these questions will be answered at the Gifted Services Information night! 6PM in the Drew library. Contact Kristina Farrell, Drew’s gifted resource teacher (for both programs) with any questions at kristina.farrell@apsva.us

**TEACHERS CORNER**

**Lunch Bunch Groups with the Counselor,** *Ms. Reeser, Montessori Counselor*

There are two types of "lunch bunch" groups with the counselor. The first is simply a "Lunch Bunch" where students come to eat lunch with the counselor in the counseling office. This is a one-time event only in order to ensure that all students can get a turn at least once a year.  The second type is a small group lunch bunch where students eat lunch once a week, on the same day with the counselor, for a period of 8 to 12 weeks.

During small group lunch bunches, students are learning about and practicing social-emotional skills. This past week and next, your child may bring home an envelope addressed to you which includes a letter with permission slip attached.  If you would like your child to participate, please sign the permission slip and have your child return it to the counseling office. Your permission is required if your child is to participate for more than three sessions. You can keep the paper with the objectives for the small group and session topics.

Small groups are not obligatory.  Many students have expressed interest in coming to the lunch bunches. If your child does not bring home a permission slip over the next several days, then they will either be invited for another cycle of small group lunch bunches which will start around January, or else they will be invited to attend one of the single lunch bunches before the school year ends.

**PTA NEWS**

The **Makers Fair** will be **Saturday, December 15th** from 11AM to 1PM in the auditorium of the Arlington Central Library. Information was sent out yesterday via Peachjar, and more information will be sent out in Monday’s PTA newsletter. You can also read more here: <https://acmpta.com/programs>

**Enrichment** begins on **Monday, October 22**! ALL enrichment classes have made full enrollment and will run. You can still sign up for Karate and Chess, and there are limited spots available for the Spanish immersion cupcake decorating class. E-mail Kia at khaynes74@gmail.com for information on that. All course descriptions and links to register for Karate and Chess can be found here: https://acmpta.com/enrichment

**UPCOMING DATES:**

* Monday, October 22: Afterschool Enrichment begins this week.
* Monday, October 22: Middle school information night. 7PM, Washington-Lee High School
* Monday, October 22 & 23: Author Jerry Pallotta visits Drew
* Thursday, October 25: Hispanic Celebration at Drew, 9:45AM
* Thursday, October 25: Early release/Parent-Teacher Conferences
* Friday, October 26: No school for children; Parent-Teacher Conferences

**LINKS**

* Arlington Montessori Program on APS: <https://drew.apsva.us/the-montessori-program/>
* Principal Genove on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CSGenove>
* Engage with APS https://www.apsva.us/engage/
* Lunch Menus: https://apsva.nutrislice.com/menus-eula-splash
* Arlington Montessori PTA: <https://acmpta.com/>.

**A MONTESSORI MOMENT**

**“Why isn’t my child getting homework?”** This question comes up a lot from parents in our program. It’s an understandable question as most of us grew up where homework was a big part of our schooling career. This week’s Montessori Moment explains why homework is not really something that is part of the Montessori pedagogy. Keep in mind that our program is also a public Montessori that has to adhere to APS and Virginia standards, so while we cannot guarantee there will be no homework, we do try to keep it at a minimum.

**Montessori Homework: Allowing Students to Find Their Own Motivation**

*Association Montessori International / US*

The article “After years of teachers piling it on, there’s a new movement to […] abolish homework” by Vicki Haddock (https://bit.ly/2q3apyw) resonated with me as a Montessorian educator. While the concept of abolishing formal homework may be new to Haddock and teacher Phil Lyons of Palo Alto, the concept is a cornerstone of the 100-year-old Montessori movement. As quoted in the article, a growing group of educators and researchers assert that what homework does “…is rob children of childhood, play havoc with family life and asphyxiate their natural curiosity. Learning becomes a mind-numbing grind rather than an engaging adventure.”

For the purpose of this discussion, we need to differentiate between “homework” and “assignments.” The homework referenced in this article is more accurately described as a series of assignments, that is to say, teacher-directed activity. Assignments of this nature actually limit the possibilities for exploration, substituting mere completion of task for the joy of discovery and personal understanding. Haddock rightly states that debate about quantity ignores the question of quality, “not all assignments are created equal – some busy work, others inspired.” Montessori educators encourage and expect children to write their own problems, design their own follow-up activities, and determine for themselves what they need to do to experience success and comprehension. Homework in a Montessori sense is work that the child does at home as an extension of his/her own interests. Furthermore, the work should be meaningful and of high interest to the child – it should have a purpose. Assignments, whether they include the use of textbooks, workbooks, or worksheets for schoolwork or homework, or particular teacher-directed activity after a lesson should be avoided.

So what does Montessori homework look like? Homework runs a gamut of “real life” activities including chores, and using everyday activities as opportunities for learning skills and stimulating curiosity. Dr. Maria Montessori believed that children should be so inspired and enthused by school activity and presentations and that their interest will naturally carry over to after school hours. Given the opportunity, children will naturally create their own projects and challenge themselves. The Montessori approach is to provide a few well-placed suggestions for a variety of follow-up experiences, to different small groups of children and opportunities for learning, contributing to exciting and meaningful occupation in the classroom workplace. It is essential for educators to trust that children will create their own meaningful work without being compelled by teachers to complete assignments.

Gunn High School senior Akila Subramanian, as quoted by Haddock, summed the situation up perfectly, “It all comes down to whether adults trust us to learn. Having no homework lets you find your own motivations.” Rather than just focusing on academic developments, Montessori advocated aiding the overall development of each child as a human being. The more freedom children have to make up their own problems and choose their own work, the more they will challenge themselves and the better able they will become at evaluating themselves. What you believe a bout a child is exactly what the child will believe about himself or herself – and that is one of the most important factors in school success.

Are we up to the challenge?