



STRODES MILLS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL!

Welcome back, students & families! I hope everyone had a wonderful & relaxing summer. We are so excited to have our students back in the building & are looking forward to a fantastic school year filled with learning, growth, new friendships, & great memories.

Our staff has been working hard to prepare for an exciting year, & we can't wait to see our hallways filled with smiling faces. Thank you for your continued support of our school community; together, we are going to make this a wonderful year!

-Mr. Zook

NEW FACES

Please join us in welcoming our many new staff members for the 2026-27 school year!

Mr. Zook
Principal

Mrs. Baker
Speech/Language Pathologist

Mrs. Bickhart
Art Teacher

Mrs. Ditty
1st Grade Teacher

Ms. Garman
Computer Teacher

Miss Honstine
3rd Grade Teacher

Ms. McClure
Cafeteria

Miss Rice
Building Substitute

Mr. Smith
Gym Teacher

Ms. Staley
1st Grade Teacher

Mrs. Wilson
1st Grade Teacher

COMING UP

- 8/31..... First Day of School
- 9/4..... No School- Act 80 Day
- 9/7..... No School- Labor Day
- 9/8..... PSA Meeting @6pm
- 9/15..... 3rd Grade Farm Field Trip
- 9/15..... Open House 5:30pm-7pm
- 9/29..... School Pictures
- 11/24..... Evening Parent Teacher Conferences
- 11/25..... Morning Conferences

OUR SCHOOL DAY

- 7:30 am
Student dropoff begins
- 8:20 am
School day starts
- 10:50-11:20 am
Lunch- 3rd Grade
- 11:25-11:55 am
Lunch- Kindergarten & Foose
- 12:00-12:30 pm
Lunch- 1st grade, Yoder & Gulick
- 2:35 pm
Dismissal

OPEN HOUSE

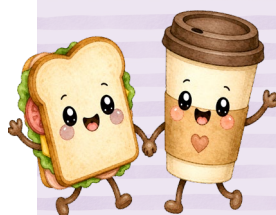
We are excited to welcome our students & families to **Open House** on **9/15 from 5:30pm to 7pm**. This will be a chance for your child to show you their classroom & for you to meet their teacher and our staff.

The Book Fair will be setup in the Library for evening shopping hours. Also, Resource Fair will be setup in the cafeteria with agencies who provide services in our area.

CAFETERIA

SMES is an approved CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) school allowing students to receive a **free breakfast & lunch**.

Packers can buy milk for 75¢.



Students will be charged a-la-cart prices for extra meal items.

SAME FACE, NEW NAME

Miss Marker will be returning to her role as School Counselor with a new name- **MRS. RANGE**.

Congratulations, Mrs. Range!

BUS SAFETY

As we begin a new school year, we want to remind SMES students to be respectful, responsible, ready, and SAFE on the bus as well as at school.

Consequences- Bus referrals may lead to phone calls home, loss of recess or riding privileges, or other consequences to ensure the safety of all students. We take these behaviors seriously & appreciate your support in helping your child understand the importance of bus safety, including:

- **Talking quietly** to avoid distracting the bus driver
- **Using kind words** to create a positive environment
- **Keeping hands to self**
- **Staying seated** at all times during the ride
- **Not moving seats** once seated
- **No eating or drinking**
- **Not damaging** the bus or its equipment

Tips for Parents- Talk regularly with your child about their bus ride experience & encourage them to speak up if they feel or see unsafe behavior. Reinforce the bus rules at home & explain why they matter.

Thank you for partnering with us to teach & reinforce positive behavior. Together, we can ensure a safe journey for every student!

NURSE NOTICES

Over-the-Counter Medication forms were distributed on the 1st day of school. This form must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian for students to receive medication from the school nurse. **If your child has not submitted the Over-the-Counter Medication form to the Nurse's Office, your child will not receive medication at school.** Forms are available online and in the nurse's office.

As a reminder, students are NOT permitted to carry any medications on their person during school hours. This includes cough drops, medicated creams, eye drops or anything used for medicinal purposes. **ANY MEDICATION THAT IS REQUIRED TO BE TAKEN AT SCHOOL MUST BE TRANSPORTED TO AND FROM SCHOOL BY A PARENT/GUARDIAN OR DESIGNATED ADULT AND ACCOMPANIED WITH A PHYSICIAN'S ORDER.** Parents/ guardians are required to sign medications into the nurse's office at drop-off. Failure to do so is a violation of the MCSD Medication Policy.

Students entering kindergarten are required to have a physical & dental form completed.

Students entering 3rd grade are required to have a dental exam.

All immunization exclusions are due 9/8/26.

Hearing & vision screenings will take place 10/22 & 10/23

Questions? Reach out to Nurse Yoder
(jsy43@mcsdk12.org)

ATTENDANCE & TIMELINESS

As we kick off a brand-new school year, one of the best ways to set your child up for success is simple, but powerful: **showing up, every day, on time.** Establishing good attendance habits now will create routines that build the foundation for lifelong learning & success. Remember:

- **School starts at 8:20am.** Students arriving after 8:20 are tardy and need to be signed in at the office. Please note, lunch choices may be limited depending on arrival time.
- Students arriving after 9:30am or leaving before 2pm will receive a 1/2 day's absence and will need to be signed in/out at the office.
- Excuses must be submitted within 3 days of an absence. They can be sent in your child's folder, emailed to Mrs. Peterson at alp35@mcsdk12.org, faxed to 717-242-5839, or entered in Family Access.
- Students can use up to 5 educational trip days per school year. A form **must** be submitted **prior** to the trip, & a 1 page report must be submitted following the report.

What you can do? Set a consistent bedtime & morning routine. Plan ahead for transportation & make sure your child knows what to expect each morning. Schedule vacations & appointments outside of school hours when possible.

Reach out if you need support—we're here to help! **Every day counts, & every student matters!**



SATISFACTORY

- 0-6 days



WARNING

- 7-9 days
- Dr. excuse **warning** letter mailed



TRUANT

- 10+ days
- Dr. excuse **required** letter mailed

PBIS- POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORTS

We are excited to kick off another great year of our PBIS program! For those new to our school, PBIS is a schoolwide approach that teaches, recognizes, & reinforces positive behaviors. It helps create a safe, supportive, & welcoming environment where all students can learn & succeed. While many of our favorite PBIS traditions will remain the same, we also have some fun new changes to look forward to this year.

Teachers & staff will continue to hand out **paw tickets** when they “catch” students demonstrating our school expectations by being **Respectful, Responsible, Ready, & Safe**. Again this year, students can choose how to use their paw tickets. They may place their tickets into prize buckets for a chance to win a prize, or they can save up the required number of tickets to redeem them for the featured **Paw Wall** prize of the month.

We are also excited to continue our **Golden Paw Ticket** tradition! Each month, teachers will recognize student(s) who consistently go above & beyond in demonstrating our school expectations- Respectful, Responsible, Ready, & Safe. Golden Paw award recipients will receive a golden paw award, a golden coin to use in our book vending machine, have their photo displayed on the golden paw wall of fame, attend a pizza party at the end of each marking period, & be recognized on ClassDojo & in our monthly school newsletter.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

- Drop-off begins at 7:30am. Remain in your vehicle until a staff member is on duty.
- Use the first **parent** parking lot for drop-off. **Do not use the bus lane**- it must stay clear for buses.
- Pull alongside the sidewalk in the first **parent** parking lot. Students should be seated on the passenger side, ready to exit.
- Please **remain in your vehicle**. The purpose of this lane is a quick “Stop, Drop, & Roll” to keep traffic moving.
- If your child needs extra time or you need to get out of your vehicle, park in a designated parking space- not along the sidewalk. This helps prevent traffic backups onto Chestnut Ridge Road & keeps everyone safe.
- Free breakfast is available beginning at 7:45am.

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

We have a few changes to our dismissal procedure this year to accommodate buses that will be making multiple afternoon runs.

- Dismissal begins at 2:35 pm.
- Students may only use the bus & bus stop they are assigned to.
- Kindergarten students **must have a grown-up waiting at their assigned bus stop**. If an adult is not present, the student will not be dropped off- the parent/guardian will have to pick them up at the bus garage.
- Students who will be parent pick-ups must bring a **note to school that morning**. Because some buses leave earlier, we cannot wait for transportation changes.



PSA

PSA meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. The first **meeting will be held on Tuesday, 9/9** at 6pm in the SMES Cafeteria.

⊗ **Children should NOT attend PSA meetings.**

They often involve planning events that are meant to be surprises for students. Childcare is not provided.

LOST & FOUND

Each year, our Lost & Found fills up with coats, sweatshirts, lunch boxes, water bottles, & other items. One way to help lost belongings find their way back home is to **label items with your student's name.**

Even labeling items with just a first name helps narrow down who it belongs to, making it much easier for us to return it to the right student.

PARENT SQUARE

We're excited to announce that we are transitioning from ClassDojo to ParentSquare as our primary communication platform for families. ParentSquare will be used to share important school information, announcements, updates, reminders, & other communications throughout the year. We encourage all families to register as soon as possible so you don't miss any important information!

What do you need to do? Families should have received an invitation to join ParentSquare via email. Simply follow the link in the invitation to create and activate your account. Once you've signed up, please take a moment to verify that your contact information is correct. After that, you're all set!

If you did not receive an invitation or have trouble registering, please reach out to the school office for assistance.

We look forward to using ParentSquare to make communication with our families easier, more convenient, and more connected!

VOLUNTEERING AT SMES

We are so grateful for the support of our families and love having you as part of our school community! Throughout the school year, there are many opportunities for families to get involved & volunteer at school. Whether its helping with a special event, supporting a classroom activity, or assisting with a school-wide event, your time & involvement make a difference.

To volunteer at SMES, all required clearances, forms, & applications must be completed & submitted online through School Gate Guardian at mcsd.schoolgateguardian.com/volunteer. New families will need to create an account & upload the required documentation. Returning families will be able to login, view clearances on file, & submit an updated application & volunteer packet.

Required Clearances & Documentation:

- Act 34 PA Criminal History Clearance
- Act 151 PA Child Abuse History Clearance
- Act 114 FBI Criminal History & Fingerprinting
- Volunteer Packet
- Volunteer Application

Please keep the following requirements in mind:

- Required clearances are valid for 5 years
- Volunteer application & volunteer packets must be submitted each school year, even if your clearances are still valid.
- All required documentation must be completed, submitted, & approved before volunteering at school.

EXTRA CLOTHES

Accidents happen- and that's perfectly okay! Keeping a **complete change of clothes** in a labeled baggie in your student's backpack can be a lifesaver after a spill at lunch, bathroom accident, or a particularly messy day on the playground.

As the seasons change, remember to check the extra outfit & replace items that no longer fit or are appropriate for the weather.

If clothes are borrowed from the Nurse, please remember to wash and return them.

VISITORS

For the safety of our students & staff, all **visitors must report to the main office** upon arrival.

When picking up a student, a **photo ID will be required**. Please be prepared to show identification to office staff before your child is released.

FIRST DAY PAPERWORK

The first day of school brings home an important stack of paperwork for parents/guardians. Please take time to carefully review each form, **complete any required information, & return everything to school as soon as possible.**

Promptly returning these forms helps us ensure we have accurate information & allows us to begin the school year smoothly.

EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

As summer winds down, many families are enjoying those last warm-weather trips & vacations. Remember that students are permitted 5 educational trip days each school year.

An Educational Trip Form must be completed & submitted prior to the trip. Following the trip, students are required to complete a one-page report about their experience. Younger students may draw pictures with simple words or sentences. Parents may help their child reflect on the trip, but the report should be completed by the student.

RIGHT TO KNOW

As a parent of a student attending a school that is receiving Federal Title I dollars, you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the teacher(s) & instructional paraprofessional(s) who instruct your child. Federal law requires every Title I school district to comply & to provide you with the requested information in a timely manner. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

- Whether the teacher met state qualifications & certification requirements for the grade level & subject he/she is teaching,
- Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, &
- What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates & additional degrees, & major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

The Every Student Succeeds Act which was signed into law in December 2015 & reauthorizes the Elementary & Secondary Education Act of 1956 includes additional right to know requests. At any time, parents & family members can request:

- Information on policies regarding student participation in assessments and procedures for opting out, &
- Information on required assessments that include subject matter tested, purpose of the test, source of the requirement (if applicable), amount of time it takes students to complete the test, & time & format of disseminating results.

Our staff is committed to helping your child develop the academic knowledge & critical thinking he/she needs to succeed in school & beyond. That commitment includes making sure that all of our teachers & paraprofessionals meet applicable PA state requirements.

If you have any questions about your child's assignment to a teacher or paraprofessional, please contact me at SMES at 717-248-7154 or email me at thz57@mcsdk12.org.

We look forward to the upcoming school year, & together we will make a difference in your child's life.

MCSD POLICIES

MCSD policies are available for families to review on our district website at www.mcsdk12.org by clicking About, School Board, then MCSD Policies.

MCSD POLICY 906

MCSD School Board Policy 105.1 requires annual notification to parents/guardians & students that it welcomes inquiries, suggestions, and constructive criticism from parents/guardians, district residents or community groups regarding the districts programs, personnel, operations & facilities. The Board adopted Policy 906 to establish procedures for general public complaints.

TITLE I SCHOOLWIDE PLAN

• September 8TH @ 5:30pm in the SMES cafeteria •

You are invited to a meeting to learn about the SMES Title I Schoolwide Plan. We will discuss how our Title I schoolwide funds support our elementary focus statements, a Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS), curriculum development, ongoing professional development for our teachers, Positive Behavior Interventions & Support (PBIS), Camp on Your Way to Kindergarten, supplemental resources, & evidence based interventions.

At the meeting, we will also solicit feedback to update our Title I home school compact & Title I building parental engagement policy. We would also encourage all to come with ideas of how to engage SMES parents in future parental involvement events.

We look forward to seeing you at the Title I schoolwide planning meeting! There will be a SMES Parent School Association (PSA) meeting immediately prior to the Title I meeting.

To access the Title I Schoolwide Plan, visit www.mcsdk12.org, Students/Parents, Federal Programs, Schoolwide Plans, Title I- SMES.

MCSD POLICY 105.1

MCSD School Board Policy 105.1 requires annual notification to parents/guardians & students that parents/guardians & students have an opportunity to review instructional materials & have access to information about the curriculum, including academic standards to be achieved, instructional materials and assessment techniques. Requests to review instructional materials & access information about the curriculum, including academic standards to be achieved, instructional materials & assessment techniques should be made by submitting a written request to the building principal.