



Parkside Montessori Principal's Newsletter for December 2019



Dear Parkside Montessori Families,

We are into December and the holiday season is in full swing! At Parkside we wrapped up November with Conferences, Craft Extravaganzas and a Stone Soup celebration. Our office almost ran out of visitor passes with all of the family volunteers that came through to help make our special November events happen! Thank you for all of the volunteering, big and small. The dedication of families at Parkside continues to be the secret sauce to our special program.

December is another short and busy month at Parkside. The staff and students have been practicing our rainy day procedures, first trimester report cards will be coming home soon and behind the scenes I have been working with families to start planning for our middle school expansion set to launch in Fall 2021.

There are so many great things happening at Parkside! Read on for important events happening this month, plus some reminders to help make our school an even better place for all students, staff and families!

Parkside's December Calendar at a Glance

Holiday Shopping Night at Talbot's Toyland (445 South B Street in Downtown San Mateo) happening tonight - Thursday, December 5th, from 7-9p, hosted by the PTA. Come enjoy an adults only evening, snag a few holiday gifts and enjoy the company of your fellow Parkside families. Click [here for more info](#).

PTA meeting on Tuesday, December 10th, from 6:30-8p in the LGI. Childcare and dinner will be provided. ***NOTE that fingerprinting will be available to parents during this meeting for a cost of \$50/person (less than at the other locations). Sign up [HERE](#) to reserve a spot, and find out more information on fingerprinting requirements for volunteers in the section below.*

School Site Council on Wednesday, December 11th from 4:30-5:30p in room 16. If you have questions about the SSC, please reach out to the Council Chair [Shannon](#).

Parkside enrollment tours for new TK/K families on Friday, December 13th from 8:30a-10:30a and Tuesday, December 17th from 8:30a-10:30a. If you know of a family that is interested in attending Parkside next year, [please pass along this flyer and invite them to RSVP for one of our four tours](#). Current TK families that wish to stay at Parkside for Kindergarten do not need to attend.

- **To our current parents-** Would you like to volunteer to be a tour guide for one of the enrollment tours? We also need volunteers to bring coffee and snacks on each tour date. Sign up [HERE](#) to volunteer as a tour guide and/or to bring something for a tour.

State of the School Meeting on Tuesday, December 17th from 6:30-8:00p in the LGI. All parents are encouraged to come learn about the work being done for our middle school expansion, as well as our latest research on the best path forward to support all of our teachers with training. Childcare and dinner will be provided. Read more [here](#).

Minimum Day on Friday, December 20.

No School on Monday, December 23 through Tuesday, January 7. Students return to school on Wednesday, January 8, 2020.

* For the latest and greatest on all things Parkside, bookmark the [Parkside PTA Calendar](#).

Updates

Rainy Day Protocol

- **In the morning** - if it is raining at 8am, the gates in front of the school will be open for parents to drop students off in their classrooms. Teachers will be in their rooms by 8am to supervise students. The drive up line will operate in the same way on rainy day mornings. PLEASE remember to pull all the way to the front of the drop off line, before letting your child out. Do not let them out until you reach this point in the line.
- **At lunch** - the students will eat in their classrooms, and our noon supervisor staff will provide breaks to our teachers.
- **Drizzle vs. Rain** - It will be a judgement call at the last minute if we need to move to a rainy day schedule for recess or lunch. Students will be allowed outside if it is drizzling, as our goal is to provide them with fresh air and an opportunity to be outside. Please ensure that your child is sent to school wearing warm and rain friendly clothes.

Fountas and Pinnell [Reading Level](#) assessments are a tool used by Parkside and all SMFC schools to help identify the current reading level of each student. Research indicates that reading at their independent level helps students improve their literacy skills and helps students advance levels. If you don't already know your child's reading level, please ask your child's teacher. Here is a [tool you can use to identify the reading level](#) of books for your child.

Tiger's Play is the new lunchtime initiative that will launch at Parkside in January 2020. One of our parents, Natalie, has been working to organize family volunteers to join our Parkside 1st-5th graders at lunch and lead an activity with them. We are looking to bring some extra joy and fun activities to our lunch at Parkside. More adult volunteers are needed to make this program a success at Parkside. You can volunteer weekly, twice a month, etc. Signups for volunteers by

specific date are now being collected. Click here for the [Tiger's Play website](#), and to volunteer. Please contact [Natatie](#) if you have any questions.

Middle School Expansion for Parkside is slated to start in the Fall of the 2021-22 school year, with our current fourth graders being the first class that has the opportunity to stay at Parkside for 6th, 7th and 8th grade. Please join me at the [State of the School Meeting](#) to learn more.

Some of the major focus areas of Parkside's 5 years strategic planning include:

- **Middle School Visits** - If you are interested in being a part of the middle school design team, please email parent [Rebecca](#) with your full name and the name of your child.
- **Teacher Recruitment** - If you know of great Montessori job boards to post on as we look to recruit more teachers for our school, please email parent [Alisa](#)
- **Teacher Training** - If you know of great Montessori teacher training opportunities, please email parent [Lesley](#).
- **Partnering with local schools of education** - Parkside is looking to develop a partnership with a local school of education to develop a teacher pipeline into our school. I have reached out to Notre Dame de Namur, Cal State East Bay and SF State. Do you have a relationship or contact with any other schools of education? Please email [Nima](#).
- **Are you interested in becoming a Montessori trained teacher?** - We are exploring our parent pipeline and believe we may have some parents that would be a great fit to make the transition into the classroom. If you are at all interested in learning more please email [Nima](#).

Fingerprinting for Volunteers is important for the safety of our students. Once you get them done, they are good for your entire time in the SMFC School District. We want all volunteers be fingerprinted, and right now it is mandatory for field trips and 1 to 1 volunteering with students without staff supervision..Sign up [HERE](#) to reserve a spot to get fingerprinted at Parkside on December 10th - it is convenient and at a slightly reduced cost.

New Staff at Parkside - Please join me in sharing a warm welcome with the new staff that have joined team Parkside over the last month!

- **Evelyn** is our new general education para-educator who will be assisting one hour a day in Mrs. Majumdar's class and one hour a day in Miss Garrigan's class. Thanks to the many parent donations to our PTA, Parkside is able to provide about an hour a day of in-classroom assistant support to our Montessori teachers. Welcome Evelyn, we are thrilled you are here!
- **Zaida** is our new special education para-educator that will be assisting with students in our Resource program and helping provide more inclusion opportunities for some of the students in our special day classrooms. Welcome Zaida - we are lucky to have you!

- **Andrea** is our new special education para-educator that will be working with our special day class students in room 19. Welcome to Parkside Andrea!
- **Mark** is our new Music For Minors teacher working in our TK-1st grade classrooms. Thanks for rocking out with us Mark!
- **Shauna** is the new district speech therapist working in room 20. She provides speech services to preschool aged SMFC students. Glad to have you Shauna!

Plumbing at Parkside became a small issue over the last month. The district was great about sending out plumbers immediately and they were able to address the issue without interruption to our school day. The root cause was the flushing of wipes and sanitary/hygiene products. They have asked me to send a reminder to all staff, students and families that we should not flush wipes or sanitary/hygiene products.

Changes in our 2nd-5th grade walk-up dismissal started the week before Thanksgiving. Thank you to all families that are now receiving your students at the gate outside of the LGI. It was noticed that walk-up dismissal for our upper grade students was getting a little unwieldy, including students running around outside the LGI. Please make sure that after you pick up your child that they are supervised and engaging in safe behavior. Please ensure they are not climbing on the trees or fencing and not running on the sidewalk near the parking lot.

PE Newsletter new for this month! Ever wonder what is happening in PE? [Here is a quick update](#) from Mr. Morrison!

TK/K Enrollment for the 2020-2021 School Year - If you have a younger sibling who will be entering one of these two grades next fall, be sure to check out the process and deadlines on the SMFC District website, as they are different from past years. Also, please note that this year Parkside Montessori and North Shoreview Montessori will have separate enrollment preferences in the district Transfer Lottery. There is no longer one district wide Montessori program lottery. Find more information on the District website [HERE](#).

Reminders

Student bathrooms are for students only. Please note that the LGI bathrooms are for students only. If you need to use the restroom or have a little one that needs your help - please use the bathroom inside the school across from room 16 or inside the office. Thank you for helping keeping all of our students safe!

We are still looking for a crossing guard! If you are interested in this PAID position or know anyone that is - please apply here: [Crossing Guard Application](#)

Going nut-free - Because our 1st-5th graders eat lunch together, I am asking all families to try to go nut free if possible. It is not yet a school policy, but it does help improve the safety of all students. Families with allergies, please look for an invitation from me to discuss our student allergies and explore suggestions to help ensure the safety of all students.

Staff Appreciation is Every Day! When was the last time you went out of your way to say thank you to your teacher and other staff supporting your student? If it was recent, please do it again! If you haven't for a while - don't wait another day! Sending an email to express your thanks can go a long way to help lift the sails of all staff. Each month I encourage you to think of a different way to say thanks to all the adults working hard to support your child.

We want your feedback on how things are going! The staff and I are eager to partner with you to make Parkside the best Montessori school in the Bay Area! We always want to hear your feedback on what is working and what can improve. Please contact your teacher directly with questions about your classroom and feel free to call the school with your technical questions and email me your schoolwide appreciations, concerns or feedback for improvement (ntahai@smfc.k12.ca.us).

Thank you for supporting Parkside!

In Partnership,
Nima Tahai

Parkside Montessori Principal