



Parkside Montessori Principal's Newsletter for February 2020



Dear Parkside Montessori Families,

Happy February! 2020 is a big year for Parkside Montessori and I am excited to use this newsletter to give you updates on all things big and small happening in our community.

This time of year is always exciting and busy at school as the staff starts to find an extended rhythm in the classroom with students, without many prolonged school breaks. February also marks a time in school administration when I deepen a dual focus of ensuring we continue to have a strong end to our current school year while beginning to plan for next school year and beyond.

I want to share my appreciation for the high level of engagement that I see in all families at Parkside. During school tours I shared with potential incoming families that the secret sauce at our school is parent involvement and volunteerism. From the classroom to the boardroom - Parkside families show up and are fierce advocates for supporting our school and our students. Thank you for modeling the way for our students and being dependable partners for our staff.

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 February and March Calendar at a Glance

K/1st Grade 100th Day of School Celebration on Friday, February 7th from 9a-11a

School Site Council (SSC) on Monday, February 10th from 4:00-5:30p in room 16. If you have questions about the SSC, please reach out to the Council Chair [Shannon](#).

President's Day - no school on Monday, February 17th

2nd Grade Parent Night with Mr. Tahai on Thursday, February 27th 6:30-8p in room 16. Parents from all 2nd grade families are encouraged to come hear an update on our middle school expansion and share your questions and feedback!

March Principal Coffee is on Wednesday, March 4th from 8:30-9:30a in the LGI

Student Talent Show! On Friday, March 6th. Reach out to parent [Hedi](#) if you have any questions

March School Site Council (SSC) Meeting on Monday, March 9th from 4-5:30p in room 16

PTA Meeting on Tuesday, March 10th from 6:30-8:00p in the LGI

Hold - Special School Site Council (SSC) Meeting on Monday, March 16th from 4-5:30p in room 16. We will determine if we need this meeting by March 9th.

Families with students that have food allergies meeting on Tuesday, March 17th from 6:30-8:00p in room 16

Spring Fling! On Saturday, March 21st for the annual Spring Fling Fundraiser. This is a casual adult night out to celebrate our Parkside community, bid on auction items, enter to win raffle prizes, and have fun! Couples, singles, community guests, and friends are all welcome! Find more information [HERE](#) on ticket sales and making donations to the event.

District Safety Drills on Tuesday, March 24th at 9am

1st Grade Parent Night with Mr. Tahai on Tuesday, March 24th 6:30-8p in room 16. Parents from all 1st grade families are encouraged to come hear an update on our middle school expansion and share your questions and feedback!

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

Montessori and Middle School Expansion Updates

Parkside will have a Montessori Coach next year! Our district leadership and school board has committed to four years of funding a Montessori coach to help improve our TK-5 program and plan for our middle school expansion. On Thursday January 30th, [Parkside's 5 year strategic plan](#) was introduced and discussed at the school board meeting. This plan focuses on improving our TK-5 program as well as planning for our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade expansion.

Parkside's Staff has launched a Montessori Leadership Team! This team is comprised of all of our Montessori-trained teachers. We will meet once a month to discuss Parkside's Montessori practices and opportunities for our school to better align with Montessori essential elements. Our work will be guided by this [Essential Elements for Montessori in the Public Sector Rubric](#).

It is critical that all families at Parkside are aware of the [Essential Elements of Montessori in the Public Sector](#). As we work to implement our strategic plan, our decisions about program changes and improvement will be guided by these essential elements.

Parkside launched our Middle School Design Team of families and staff that will spend the next three months engaging in research to develop the vision for our middle school. [Learn more about our research meetings and experience here](#), and save the date for Tuesday, May 19th

when the design team will hold a whole school meeting to share our learnings. If you have questions, email parent [Rebecca](#).

Parkside is now an official member of the [American Montessori Society](#)! This is a first and important step on our journey to become an AMS-accredited school.

General School Updates

It is with sadness and best wishes that I share that Mrs. LaBerge has announced that she will retire at the end of this school year. While we are all sad that we won't get to see Mrs. LaBerge every day, we are putting on a brave face and making sure to send her off with love. Kristin - on behalf of the staff and community, I share our deep gratitude for everything you have done and will continue to do to make Parkside an amazing place.

Tiger's Play is a new lunchtime initiative that is thriving with the support of parent volunteers. Big thank you to parents [Natalie](#) and [Nicole](#) for taking a small idea and making it a BIG success. Sign up to volunteer during lunch to help provide our students with fun recess activities. Learn more and sign up to volunteer on the [Tiger's Play website](#).

Staff changes in our Pre-K Montessori program - In December we said goodbye to long time Parkside Pre-K classroom assistant Shanta Duvvuri. We will miss Shanta and wish her our best. Once a Parkside Tiger, always a Parkside Tiger! And while we are sad to see Shanta go, we are thrilled to welcome Laura Hernandez and Michelle Reyes as our two new Montessori Pre-K classroom assistants. Welcome Laura and Michelle - thanks for joining us!

Wasps at lunch - This year our lunch tables have had periodic visits from wasps. We have worked with the district maintenance team to put out traps and our noon supervisors are closely monitoring students for safety. We are working to identify if there is a nest or if the smell of food is bringing these unwanted visitors.

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

Where in the world is Mr. Tahai? February and March will take me off campus more than usual. While time away is hard, each of these events is aligned to supporting the work in our strategic plan, with a particular focus on deepening my understanding of quality Montessori and recruiting trained teachers and an amazing coach.

- On February 20th and 21st, I will be attending [a Montessori Coach's training](#) in Oakland.
- On Friday March 6th I will fly out to Portland for the [AMI annual teacher job fair](#). I am sad to miss our talent show - so please take pictures and videos for me :)
- On Wednesday March 11th-Sunday March 15th, I will be at the [AMS Event](#) in Dallas.
- Design Team excellent school visits on Friday March 27th, April 24th and May 1st.

[Our school website](#) is currently undergoing some changes to become more user friendly and current. Big thanks to parent [Erin](#) and Ms. Simpson for their improvement efforts. As you peruse the website, please send me your feedback on areas you see that could be improved and we will add it to our list! Please know that the [PTA website](#) continues to be a great resource for families.

Get involved with district level strategic planning by [attending an LCAP family & community engagement](#). The LCAP is the Local Control Accountability Plan and San Mateo/Foster City is about to develop their three year strategic plan. Attend a meeting to learn more and share your perspective.

Tiger wear Fridays is a new school spirit initiative - where staff, students, and families are encouraged to wear Parkside Tiger gear to school on Fridays. Students can wear their walk-a-jog shirts or [families can purchase fresh Tiger Gear](#) on our etsy page. Big thanks to our PTA for helping make this happen!

Share your feedback on Parkside facilities improvements - Our school district is soliciting feedback from all schools regarding an updated Facilities Master Plan. Share your feedback for facilities improvements that you'd like to see at Parkside by [taking this survey](#).

Parkside Geese are back at it with their pooping shenanigans. I'm happy to share that the district has committed to send out cleaners twice a week to deal with the mess.

PSA about chronic absence - This cold season has hit our students especially hard. One important data indicator for schools and student academic success is monitoring chronic absence. A student is chronically absent if they miss 18 or more days a year. That is 10% or on average one day every two weeks. This is regardless of whether or not the absences are excused. Children that are chronically absent are more likely to fall behind socially and academically. If your child has been hit hard this cold season, please make sure to limit or eliminate all additional extraneous missed school days.

Does your child have a food allergy? If so, we want to hear from you. I will be hosting a meeting on Tuesday March 17th with for families that have children with food allergies to go over our current protocols and solicit your feedback on steps we can take to ensure the safety of all students. Please save the date and join us!

EVS Survey and CHKS Survey - This year the San Mateo/Foster City School District will be administering two surveys to staff, students, and families. The California Healthy Kids Survey will be open for all at the end of this month. A new survey, called EVS, will be administered for all in mid-March.

Valentine's Day is coming up and you can expect that your teacher will be communicating with you about their preference for what will happen in the classroom during this day..

Reminders

Dropping your kid(s) off in the morning? Please drive all the way up to the furthest open drive-up area before letting your kids out.

The Lost and Found is between rooms 16 and 18. Think your child may be missing something? Come check the lost and found!

Parking spots in both parking lots are all assigned to staff. We apologize for the inconvenience of not having more parking spots for families, and we appreciate you honoring staff by not parking in their assigned spaces, even if you see them open during the school day. Spaces are first come first serve after 3p.

Students are in classes at 8:20a - please do everything you can to have your child on campus by 8:15a, so that they can enter the classroom at 8:20a with their peers. If your child arrives on campus at 8:20a or later, please have them enter through the office.

Staff Appreciation is Every Day! Love is in the air during February and it is a great time to share some extra love with your teacher! Sometimes even a small thank you - or appreciation for a specific thing done well can go a long way. 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 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