



# PURPLELICIOUS NEWS

It's not a color. It's a newsletter.



## Principal's Message

### Stay Connected

INSTAGRAM:  
@CITYSPRINGSSCHOOL  
FACEBOOK:  
CITY SPRINGS  
ELEMENTARY/MIDDLESCHOOL  
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CLASSDOJO FOR DAILY NEWS

### School Leadership

Dr. Rhonda L. Richetta, Principal  
Ms. Jenae Toulson, Asst. Principal  
for PK-3, 443-902-1353  
JAJones@bcps.k12.md.us  
Mr. Rob Summers, Asst. Principal  
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Happy New Year! I hope you had a joyful and restful holiday season, and you are as excited as we are for the experiences and opportunities the new year will bring.

As we kick off 2025, it marks the halfway point of the school year. We will reflect on the achievements of the past few months and look ahead to all the ways we can continue to support and inspire our students. It is a time for reflection on how far our students have come and where they are headed.

Our teachers work hard every day and are continuously engaging in professional learning so they can best teach and serve your children. Students are served best when teachers and parents work together. Please stay connected with your child's teacher. If you are not already connected to your child's teacher through ClassDojo, please reach out to connect today!

Let's make 2025 a year of growth and accomplishments that we achieve together in partnership for our children.

Respectfully Yours,  
Dr. Rhonda L. Richetta

## House System

Last fall, we rolled out the House System for our faculty and staff with each educator randomly “sorted” into a House (think Harry Potter) to add to our community’s sense of belonging and school spirit. We’ve been having fun competitions, wearing our House t-shirts, and doing random acts of kindness.



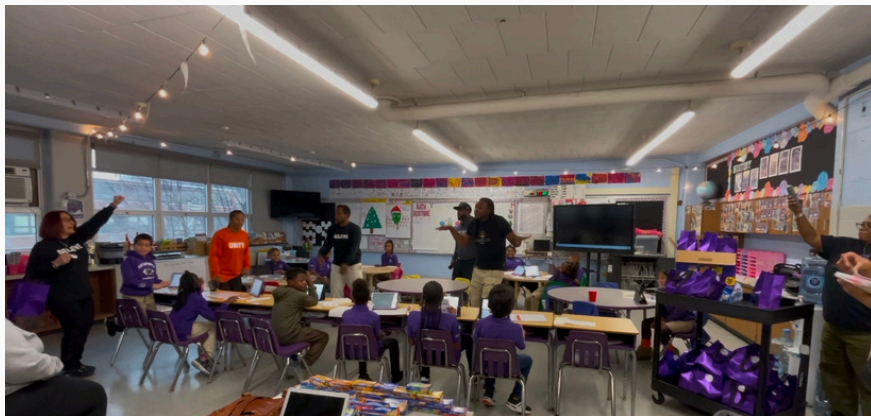
Last month, we held a House cookie decorating contest, judged by Joe Benny (pictured above) from Benny's restaurant in Little Italy. The winner was the Believe House, the current House Competition leader with 19 points. At the end of this school year, teachers will consider launching the House System with our City Springs students.

## The Atten-Dance Party!

On December 11, Dr. Richetta and several City Springs administrators hosted a new monthly tradition: The Atten-Dance Party! They made surprise visits to every classroom to deliver goody bags to the **111 students who had perfect attendance for November**. With music playing, dancing, singing, and lots of high-fives, the group called out each student’s name and celebrated them in front of their peers.

We’re thrilled to announce that for December, 149 students had perfect attendance! Keep up the great work!

Remember: Attendance matters! Please make sure your child is in school unless they are sick. **Who will be celebrated in January? February?**



**GOAL:** Every student in uniform every day, ready to learn!

## One Book Baltimore

Mr. Wyatt Oroke, our 8th Grade English teacher, co-founded One Book Baltimore in collaboration with Baltimore City Public Schools, the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and T. Rowe Price in 2018. The program uses a selected young adult text each year to help teach a central message across Baltimore City to all 7th and 8th graders. Mr. O co-creates discussion guides and lesson plans for each text.

The fall 2024 One Book Baltimore text was *Onyx & Beyond* by Amber McBride, the story of Amber’s father growing up in 1970s and dealing with his mother battling dementia. Last fall, Ms. McBride joined our 8th grade scholars (first photo below) and co-taught a lesson with Mr. O. Also pictured is author Tami Charles who has visited City Springs for previous One Book Baltimore programs.



## Eagles Winter Sports

Our winter sports season is in full swing. We have elementary and middle school boys and girls Basketball and Volleyball teams (Volleyball pictured).

Congratulations to all athletes and coaches. Be sure to come out and support our Eagles. Get the full sports schedule at [citysprings.school/events](http://citysprings.school/events). Go, Eagles!

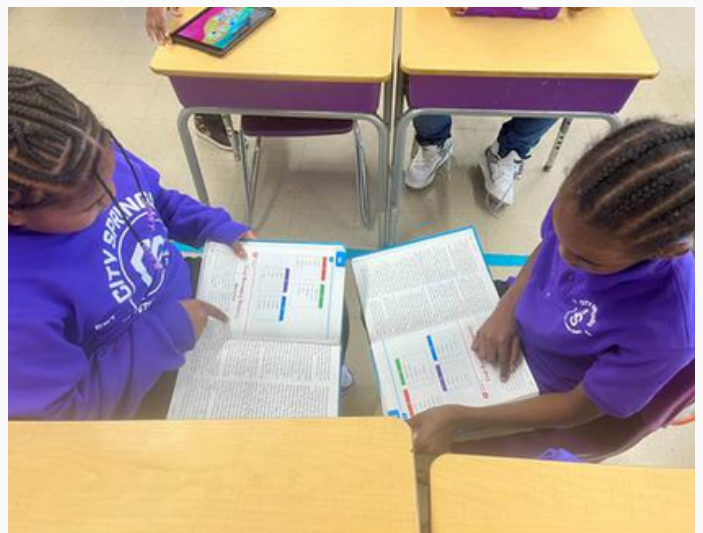


## Class Spotlight: 3rd Grade

By Ms. Kinsey and Ms. Parker

Scholars work hard every day in our Reading and Language classes. Content is presented in numerous ways to meet the needs of all learners. Often times, students work independently to display what they have learned. They are also given the opportunity to collaborate with partners to extend their learning.

Every day, students read with a partner after completing their lesson. Partner reading, where two individuals take turns reading aloud to each other, offers numerous benefits. This collaborative approach enhances comprehension as partners can discuss the text, clarify misunderstandings, and share insights, deepening their understanding of the material. Additionally, partner reading promotes fluency, as readers can model pronunciation, pacing, and expression for one another. It fosters a sense of accountability and motivation, encouraging participants to engage more actively with the text. Ultimately, partner reading cultivates a love for literature and strengthens communication skills, making it a valuable tool in both educational and social settings. Keep reading, City Springs!



# Community School Coordinator Corner

**HOLIDAY SUPPORT!** Last month, numerous families received wonderful support for the holidays from great community partners!

Santa's Helpers Anonymous delivered Christmas dinner packages and gifts to 41 City Springs families on Christmas Eve morning.

St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore provided Christmas dinner packages to another 50 families and donated 1,000+ books with every student receiving two new books to keep.

Adding extra holiday magic and continuing a City Springs tradition, T. Rowe Price donated 500+ pairs of pajamas for students and teachers to wear on the day before the winter holiday break.

Thanks to Campaign Zero and another anonymous donor, at the Dec. 20 Friday Assembly, parents in attendance were surprised by more than 100 gifts hidden behind the auditorium curtains. They were able to select new gifts for their students.

Thank you to all our partners for making a real difference in the lives of our families and spreading holiday cheer and joy!



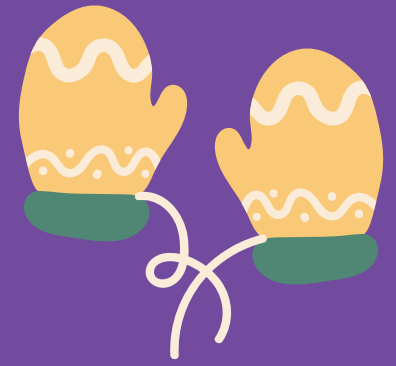
PJ Day with donated pajamas



Mr. Henshaw's class with their donated books



Surprise gifts for parents at the Friday Assembly on Dec. 20



## Need Winter Help?

Winter is here! If your child needs a winter coat, hat, or gloves, please see Mr. Trumino.

Do you have any other needs for your student or family? Mr. Trumino and City Springs' community partner, Elev8 Baltimore, are here to help.

**MR. TRUMINO  
COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
COORDINATOR:**

[atrumino@elev8baltimore.org](mailto:atrumino@elev8baltimore.org)

Phone: 443-836-6019



## NEXT PTO MEETING

Fri., Jan. 31, 9:15-10:15 am,  
Cafeteria

# A Healthier Winter

**Use good hygiene:** Minimize germs/viruses spreading by washing your hands regularly with soap and water, sneezing/coughing into your elbow/sleeve (not your hands), and cleaning shared surfaces in your home (door handles, light switches, etc.).

**Keep your child home if they are sick:** BCPS policy states that a student with a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea must stay home until symptoms have been gone for 24 hours. Rest is best when you or your child are sick.

**Minimize sharing:** Teach your child not to share cups, plates, water bottles/straws, utensils, and snacks.

**Eat healthy food:** Feeding your family fruits and vegetables every day (and avoiding processed food) gives them the vitamin C, zinc, and other vitamins and minerals they need to support natural immunity. Try carrots, potatoes, broccoli, brussels sprouts, oranges, and other citrus fruits.

**Get enough sleep:** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children 6 to 12 years old get 9-12 hours. Children who don't get enough sleep are far more likely to get sick, stay sick for longer, and suffer from more severe cold/flu symptoms.

Common signs of winter illnesses:

- Fever
- Cough
- Runny nose and/or red/itchy eyes (not allergy-related)
- Feeling more tired than normal
- Body aches
- Chills or hot flashes
- Vomiting/diarrhea

QUESTIONS? Contact our Health Center at INFO

# City Spring Re-Chartering Support!

Thanks to those who joined us last month for the virtual City Schools Commissioners meeting about our pending re-charter. It's not too late to share your support for City Springs and explain why we should receive a five- or eight-year renewal rather than only three years. On Dec. 4, 2024, Commissioner Mujahid Muhammad visited City Springs for a personal tour with Dr. Richetta. Our students and teachers were incredible ambassadors for our school and program. .

Please send an email to the Board prior to Jan. 10 at [portfoliorecommendations@bcps.k12.md.us](mailto:portfoliorecommendations@bcps.k12.md.us) supporting a five- or eight-year renewal for City Springs.

What should you include in your email?

- An explanation of why we should not be impacted negatively by the 2021-22 removal of our families from Perkins Homes due to the Housing Authority's redevelopment of the neighborhood and low school ratings because of it.
- Why you love City Springs and how your child is thriving-- your personal experience matters!.
- Why we deserve more than a three-year renewal

# Cell Phone Policy

Don't forget that there is a no cell phone policy at City Springs for all grades.

This means that students must turn in their cell phones to their teachers daily. This is not just a middle school policy; it is a whole-school policy.

This policy creates the best possible learning environment for your student. Thank you for reinforcing this policy with your child.



## Upcoming Events

**Fri., Jan 17:** City-wide Early Release Day

**Mon., Jan. 20:** School Closed for MLK day

**Fri., Jan. 31:** PTO Meeting

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS:** City Springs only will be closed for our Intersession from Feb. 17 through Feb. 21. This is NOT a city-wide closure. City Springs reopens on Mon., Feb. 24.

## Baltimore Curriculum Project

Last month, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) released its annual Star Ratings for public schools based on academic achievement, student growth, progress in closing achievement gaps, overall school climate, and more. Many City schools had a decrease in their Star Ratings from challenges during the pandemic's early years like disruptions to in-person learning and remote instruction difficulties.

Baltimore Curriculum Project's (BCP) six neighborhood conversion charter schools, however, are stories of recovery and resilience. Since 2022, all six BCP schools have increased their total points earned in the Star Rankings, some making huge strides and resulting in an additional star. This is a testament to the dedication of our principals, faculty, staff, and parents and to the quality of the BCP program.

**We're thrilled that City Springs and Wolfe Street Academy increased their Maryland Star Rating for 2023-24.** Congratulations, City Springs, and to all BCP schools for your ongoing growth and improvement!



The table displays the MSDE Star Ratings for six Baltimore Curriculum Project (BCP) schools from 2022 to 2024. The schools are: City Springs Elementary/Middle, Frederick Elementary, Govans Elementary, Hampstead Hill Academy, Pimlico Elementary/Middle, and Wolfe Street Academy. The table shows the number of stars for each year and the percentage increase in points from 2022 to 2024.

BCP SCHOOLS	2022	2023	2024	% INCREASED
City Springs Elementary/Middle	★★	★★	★★★★	+10.6%
Frederick Elementary	★★	★★	★★	+5.2%
Govans Elementary	★★	★★★★	★★★★	+8.7%
Hampstead Hill Academy	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	+2.7%
Pimlico Elementary/Middle	★	★★	★★	+22.2%
Wolfe Street Academy	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	+9.8%