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## PGCPS Express: Happy New School Year, Team PGCPS!

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September 4, 2020



### Get the Scoop

#### First Week of Virtual Learning: We Made It!



We made it to the end of the first week of virtual learning! For some, it may have been a breeze and for others, a bit more challenging — but we will get through our new normal together. [In the words of CEO Dr. Monica Goldson](#), let's continue to support each other and keep finding ways to better serve our students, families and community."

As we continue with distance learning, please note the following:

**Always follow PGCPS protocols related to Zoom meeting settings.**

- [Confirming Zoom meeting settings](#)
- [Getting Started: PGCPS Zoom](#)

**School social media managers** should not post images from classes in session unless publicity release forms are on file for all students who appear in the image.

#### Deadlines: SafeSchools, Social and Emotional Learning

The deadline to complete mandatory **SafeSchools training modules** has been extended to **Tuesday, Sept. 8**. [Start trainings now!](#)

The deadline for teachers to complete **Social Emotional Learning modules** is now **Friday, Sept. 11**.

Photo: CEO Dr. Monica Goldson welcomes students and staff back to school from her virtual office.

## In the Spotlight

### Speech-Language Pathologist Featured in 'USA Today'



**Ben Goldstein, a speech language pathologist based at Beltsville Academy**, recently shared his personal journey with stuttering in [USA Today](#): "When I saw Brayden Harrington, the 13-year-old from New Hampshire, stutter openly and authentically on national television, I saw myself, a version of myself I wish I had been at Brayden's age."

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### Looking for Distance Learning Pros!

Do you have advice on making the most of the distance learning experience with students? This fall, we will highlight **distance learning stars** each week on PGCPSP social media. More details on the way!

**Nominate a colleague** who makes you #PGCPSProud by sending their name, office/school, photo and a brief description (100 words or less) to [communications@pgcps.org](mailto:communications@pgcps.org). Submissions may be edited for length, clarity or grammar.

## Benefits Services: Our Focus Is You

### #HealthyPGCPS: September Activities



**Fall into good health and fitness!** Take advantage of free fitness classes and wellness activities this month available through the Benefits Office. All activities will be hosted virtually. Classes are open to all employees.

Details are available on the [Employee Wellness Program](#) webpage. For more information, please contact [wellness.benefits@pgcps.org](mailto:wellness.benefits@pgcps.org).

**Fitness Classes:** Chair Yoga/Meditation (Sept. 8), Zumba (Sept. 10)

**Virtual Cooking Demonstration:** Fall Foodie (Sept. 9)

**Wellness Webinar:** So You Think You Can Chill (Sept. 23)

**Fall Online Challenge:** Virtual Weight Loss Challenge (registration starts Sept. 14.)

## Announcements

### 2020 Alumni Hall of Fame Nominations

[Nominations are open](#) for the 2020 PGCPSP Hall of Fame through Thursday, Sept. 10:

- Athletic Achievement
- Distinguished Educator
- Distinguished Young Leader
- Humanitarian/Public Service Achievement
- Professional Achievement

Nominees must exemplify the highest standards of ethical conduct and moral character. All candidates will be judged on their significant and/or long-term contributions and success.

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### Parent "Opt-Out" Information

With the continuation of distance learning at home, there have been questions about students being viewed or heard during live lessons without parental consent. While we would expect all students to be engaged and participants, parents may "opt-out," meaning they may request that their child is not seen or heard during live lessons.

Parents who wish to opt-out must complete an electronic ["opt-out" form](#). For parents who permit their child to be seen and heard during lessons, no further action is required.

## ICYMI: In Case You Missed It

### Virtual Learning Platform Options

Teachers have the option of connecting with students using **PGCPS Zoom or Google Meet**. The Technology Training Team (T3) has developed a [useful site](#) that provides training opportunities, in-depth information and resources to include these digital tools.

PGCPS Zoom is our preferred online platform due to the "waiting room" and "mute all" features. To safeguard the learning environment, all teachers must utilize the "waiting room" option. Only known persons should be granted access.

Additionally, Zoom has the ability to run usage reports which helps to verify attendance. All instructional staff have access to Zoom and should only access this application through the Staff Portal (Applications). PGCPS has licensed Zoom accounts where district settings have been enabled to increase the ability to protect staff and students. **The public version of Zoom should never be used for instruction or any PGCPS-related matters.**

Staff also have the option of using Google Meet, which allows interaction with students using chat, reactions, or even closed captions. Educators should always launch their sessions with students using the Meet link in Google Classroom. Later in the fall, Google will release several new features. View [this graphic](#) to see which new features will be enabled in the G Suite for Education version.

Whether using PGCPS Zoom or Google Meet, students should join through Clever. Teachers may connect through Clever as well. Please refer to the T3 site for more information and guidance on Clever.

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### New Teacher Academy Goes Virtual

New to PGCPS? Join the [New Teacher Academy](#) and develop your skills and understanding in implementing curricula and programs required by the school system.

This year's theme "Unlocking Your Teaching and Learning Potential" will focus on Framework for Teaching by Charlotte Danielson. The series targets first- through third-year teachers who want to advance the teaching and learning experience in their classroom. However, all teachers are welcome to attend. Sign up now in [MyPPS](#).

## STAY CONNECTED

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