



# COME GROW WITH SHEPHERD

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A Primer for New Families

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# WELCOME

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Welcome to Shepherd Elementary, home of the Mustangs! The Shepherd PTO Family Engagement Committee and School Family Liaisons would like to ease your way into our community. This guide is designed for new families as they navigate and plan for the months ahead. If you have any questions, contact [info@shepherd-elementary.org](mailto:info@shepherd-elementary.org). We hope you have an amazing year!





# ABOUT SHEPHERD ELEMENTARY

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A Proud International Baccalaureate School Since 2011

Alexander R. Shepherd Elementary School is named for the territorial governor of the District of Columbia in the early 1870's and it is the product of an active community committed to education. In 1917, the civic association of Shepherd Park petitioned the District government to build an elementary school to educate the neighborhood children as well as attract more families to the area. After more than a decade of requests, the school board responded to petitions from parents of 143 children and agreed to provide a school.

The school in 1928 consisted of two one-room portables parked near Kalmia Road on the farmland that the association had recommended for a building site. It took another four years, but finally the red-bricked Alexander R. Shepherd Elementary School opened in January 1932. The descendants of Governor Shepherd helped dedicate the school and unveiled a photographic portrait of its namesake.

Shepherd continues to be one of the most highly regarded elementary schools in the District system, due to the commitment of its parents, teachers, and administrators.

Some of the traditions at Shepherd include Back-to-School Night in September, Fall Fest, Black History Month Celebrations in February, the annual Spring musical, the Science Fair, and the annual Halloween parade.

## Quick Facts

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Principal: Tyra Russell

School Mascot: The Mustangs

Website: [www.shepherd-elementary.org](http://www.shepherd-elementary.org)

School Colors: Green & Gold



# PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

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Supporting the Vision







# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

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Like many public schools, Shepherd relies on its parent community to help bring out the best in our classrooms and community. We recognize that your time is precious and offer ways to help from your office, on weekends, during the school day — help is needed in many different ways. If everyone pitches in just a little, our kids and community will benefit. Email [pto@shepherd-elementary.org](mailto:pto@shepherd-elementary.org) or visit <https://shepherd-elementary.org/family-engagement/> and let us know how you would like to get involved.



## PTO

The Shepherd Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) is a non-profit organization that exists to enrich the experience of Shepherd students, and to bring families, teachers and staff together. We raise funds to support educational and enrichment programs for our students and puts on events to bring the community together. The PTO holds monthly meetings (typically, the third Wednesday of each month) and all are welcome to attend!

## LSAT

The Local School Advisory Team (LSAT) is a group of elected and appointed members that exists for every DCPS school. The team consists of parents, teachers, non-instructional school staff and a community member to advise the Principal on school priorities and budgetary issues.

## RPN

The role of the Shepherd Room Parent Network (RPN) is to help facilitate communication between teachers, families, the PTO, and Shepherd administration. Responsibilities include sharing class specific information and school events with families; organizing parent help for class activities; helping with fundraisers; and encouraging PTO participation.



# COMMUNICATIONS

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## How to Stay Up-to-Date on Shepherd News and Happenings

### Communications "To Do" for New Parents

- 1 Sign-up for PTO bulletins at [sespto.membershiptoolkit.com](http://sespto.membershiptoolkit.com). This is an opt-in e-mail list. Even if you have provided your e-mail to your teacher, the front office or on a DCPS form, you must still register in order to receive e-mail communications from PTO on what is happening at Shepherd.
- 2 Each teacher and designated room parents will communicate individually with their families with information specific to their classrooms. Please see your child's teacher and room parent representatives for their preferred method of communication.
- 3 Bookmark our school website [www.shepherd-elementary.org](http://www.shepherd-elementary.org), which is a great resource to learn what is taking place at school. The latest news from Principal Russell and PTO, as well as upcoming events, are featured on the Home page.
- 4 Shepherd also has an all-school family listserv hosted via [group.io](https://shepherd-es.groups.io/g/main). This is a great forum to dialogue with other Shepherd families across classes and grades. Join the account at <https://shepherd-es.groups.io/g/main>
- 5 Follow us on Facebook (@ShepherdElemPTO)

### Weekly Emails

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Principal Russell distributes a weekly Newsletter via *Class Dojo* to all enrolled families weekly on Fridays. She will also occasionally send important notifications via this app as well. On Wednesdays, the PTO distributes a separate email bulletin to all families who are registered as PTO members.



# GIVING BACK TO SHEPHERD

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## Some of the Many Ways YOU Can Contribute to Shepherd's Success

Throughout the year, the Shepherd Elementary School PTO hosts events to help and improve our school community with the support of Shepherd families and the wider community. We also raise vital funds that benefit our children by paying for additional resources that augment your child's elementary education. The PTO funds such items as experiential learning, supplemental field trips, student programming and performances, extracurricular activities, and more. While monetary contributions are always welcome, we also offer opportunities to contribute your time and talent to support Shepherd. Here's how you can help:

- **Volunteer** - Shepherd relies on its parent community to help bring out the best in our classrooms and community. We recognize that your time is precious and offer ways to help from your office, on weekends, during the school day — help is needed in many different ways.
- **Shop for Shepherd** - Support Shepherd Elementary while getting your shopping done! Whether you need Shepherd Gear, or you are shopping online, you can earn money for Shepherd while you shop. Affiliate programs include Land's End, ShopRaise, and more.
- **Become a Sponsor** - Shepherd Elementary School is fortunate to have the support of many local businesses—from the Shepherd Park community and adjacent areas, from parent-family-alumni entrepreneurs, and from businesses that serve and support schools and students.
- **Donate Directly to the 180 Fund** - A contribution to the 180 Fund is vital to support the PTO's annual operating budget and will directly impact your child's educational experience.

Visit <https://shepherd-elementary.org/family-engagement/giving-back-to-shepherd/> for more information.








# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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Shepherd has a busy annual schedule, with many events for parents, families, students, teachers, and the community at large. Our all-school calendar is maintained on the Shepherd Elementary website (<https://shepherd-elementary.org/school-calendar/>) and also incorporates important dates from the DCPS school calendar. Major annual events are described here. We can't wait to see you and meet your family at our next Shepherd gathering!



Throughout the school year:

- Monthly PTO and LSAT meetings
- Parent-Teacher Conferences (three designated days set each year by DCPS)
- Spirit Weeks

August through October:

- Back-to-School Night and Open Houses
- First days of school for K-5 and Pre-K students
- Fall Fest
- Halloween Parade

November through February:

- Winter Concert
- Summer Camp Expo
- Black History Month Celebration

March through June:

- Spring Musical
- Spring Gala and Auction
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Field Day
- Science Fair
- End-of-Year Promotion Celebrations
- 5th Grade Graduation Ceremony



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## When does the school day begin and end?

Classroom instruction begins at 8:45 AM daily, and those students who do not participate in the SESSA "before care" program are welcome to enter the school starting at 8:30 AM daily. Dismissal commences for all students at 3:15 PM daily.

## What does my child need to bring to school?

Students generally need a refillable water bottle, lunch box (if bringing lunch), and a backpack large enough to fit a 9x12 folder and lunchbox. Younger ECE (Early Childhood Education) students are also recommended to bring a change of clothing. School Supply Lists by grade can be found [here](#)

## My child speaks a language other than English at home. Where can they get help?

Families should contact the Language Acquisition Division of DCPS at 202-671-0750 to make an assessment appointment. Students who qualify for additional support in English may receive instruction from Shepherd's English Language Learner (ELL) teacher.

## What aftercare and extracurricular activities are available for my student?

Aftercare is provided by Shepherd Elementary School Star Achievers (SESSA). You can learn more about their programming and register for care at <https://www.sesstarachievers.com/>. Shepherd Elementary also has a number of clubs and extracurricular offerings, including a spring musical and girls' cheerleading team. Learn more at <https://shepherd-elementary.org/school-life-2/extracurricular-activities/>.





# CONTACT US!

[www.shepherd-elementary.org](http://www.shepherd-elementary.org)

(202) 576-6140

PTO Contact: [PTO@shepherd-elementary.org](mailto:PTO@shepherd-elementary.org)

General School Inquiries: [brenda.wilson@k12.dc.gov](mailto:brenda.wilson@k12.dc.gov)

## HAVE A GREAT YEAR!