

**RIVERSIDE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
HANDBOOK**

Revised September 2016

**Riverside School
58 Riverside Drive
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
(609) 806-4260
School Office Hours: 8:00am-4:00pm**

PARENT HANDBOOK

Dear Riverside Parents:

The Riverside family extends a warm welcome to all! Riverside's home-school partnership grows stronger every year. We are proud of the community effort which continues to nourish teaching and learning. One of our most important goals is to create a stimulating and supportive environment in which our students feel secure to take risks as they meet academic challenges. Our school is dedicated to the academic and social success of all students. We enthusiastically encourage parents to work with us to construct meaningful learning opportunities which require active and thoughtful student engagement. Please talk with us on a regular basis. We want you to know about our programs, curriculum, and teaching methods.

We are pleased to provide this handbook as another link in communication between home and school. Please take a few moments to become familiar with the policies and procedures that help guide us everyday. Please call on us should you have questions about any part of the school experience. We are delighted that you are part of this fabulous community.

Sincerely,

Valerie Ulrich
Principal

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GENERAL INFORMATION

School Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Homeroom 8:25 a.m.)

Students may enter the school at 8:20 a.m. If students must occasionally arrive earlier, they should report directly to the All-Purpose Room (grades PK-1) or Gym (grades 2-5) where they will be supervised until they move to the classrooms at 8:25 a.m. We request that children who are in the All-Purpose Room or Gym at this time sit quietly and relax until being dismissed to their classrooms. Please, no students should arrive before 8:00 a.m. Please promote effective instruction by arriving on time.

Visitor Passes:

All adults entering Riverside School must immediately stop in the main office to sign the daily visitor ledger. Each visitor (parent, classroom guest, presenter, etc.) must obtain a “Visitor Pass” from the office administrative assistant. This pass must be placed on the person and be visible to Riverside staff. Each pass has the visitor’s name and date. Upon leaving the building, visitors must sign out in the main office and return their “Visitor Pass”.

This measure will further assist us in keeping a safe environment for all. Please help by following these guidelines. Riverside staff will approach adults without a Visitor Pass and direct them to the main office to obtain one.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

We are making every effort to insure students safely arrive and depart from school. School crossing guards are on duty from 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. and from 2:50 p.m. - 3:20 p.m. to assist children in their safe travel. The Princeton Township Police Department determines the placement of crossing guards for Riverside School.

By Car:

If you are driving your youngster(s) to school, please drop them off at the main entrance located on Riverside Drive. Pull into the lane closest to the school and continue as far forward as possible. Since this is a fire lane, you may only pause long enough to drop off your child(ren). Please **do not** leave your car engine running and **do not** leave your car.

Please do not drive through or park in the staff parking lot. We ask that you follow these same procedures when picking your youngster(s) up at the end of the day. There will be a staff member in front of the school at the beginning and end of the day to help insure your child(ren)’s safety. Please, never leave your car and do not run the car’s engine as you wait. State law requires all car engines be shut down while waiting in front of schools.

Walkers:

Students walking to school should enter the building through the main entrance on Riverside Drive. Children arriving between 8:25 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. should proceed directly to their classrooms. Children who arrive before 8:25 a.m. should report to the All-Purpose Room or Gym.

Bicycles:

Children riding a bike to school should dismount their bikes upon entering and leaving school grounds. They are to walk their bikes to the bicycle area. A chain and lock are recommended, and helmets are mandatory in the state of New Jersey, effective July 1, 1992.

By Bus:

Children arriving by bus will enter the school by the Prospect Avenue entrance and will be directed to the All-Purpose Room or Gym until 8:25 a.m.

Late Arrival and late passes: (After 8:30 a.m.)

We must have an accurate count of every child in Riverside School starting at 8:30 a.m. Should an emergency set upon us, we need to have full knowledge of the whereabouts of our children. Checking in at the main office is an important piece of the puzzle we put together every day. Please, if your child is late, you must walk with your child to the office to sign him/her in, and to get a late pass. The late pass is to be given to the teacher upon your child's arrival in the classroom.

Early Dismissals:

Children are dismissed at 1:00 p.m. on those days designated on the school calendar as having early dismissals. Lunch is still served on these days.

Children who are being picked up before the end of the school day will only be released to the custody of a parent or guardian unless prior arrangements have been made with the classroom teacher or the Main Office staff. When picking up your child, please report to the Main Office and arrangements will be made for your child to meet you there. **No exceptions.**

Changes in Dismissal Routines:

Teachers should be notified in writing if there will be any changes in a child's regular dismissal routine, such as, your child will be walking home to another child's house or will be picked up by another parent. Parents are reminded that children may not ride home on any bus other than the one to which they are assigned. Children will be released only to those adults identified by the child's parent as provided on the child's emergency card.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL DELAYS/CLOSINGS

Because of unforeseen emergencies, usually related to weather, school may be delayed, closed early, or closed entirely. If the forecast indicates the possibility of a delay or closing, you should listen to the radio **WHWH (1350 AM); NJ 101.5 WKXW FM, check television WPVI.TV Channel 6 Action News; WCAU Channel 10 NBC; Comcast Channel 25, online at www.prs.k12.nj.us or by calling Princeton Regional School's Emergency Closing Message at 609-806-4202.**

Parents should make alternative child care arrangements well in advance of such occurrences. On early closings, room parents will attempt to contact parents prior to dismissal, but each family is urged to plan with youngsters for this type of emergency.

ABSENCES

Whenever a student has been absent, he/she should bring a written excuse to the classroom teacher stating the reason for the absence and signed by his/her parent or guardian.

Health Office personnel will call parents after their child has been absent for three consecutive days. If you know that your child will be absent for any period of time, please send a note to the classroom teacher and the Main Office prior to the absence.

Reporting Student Absence

Princeton Regional Schools has a student absence call-in line for grades Pre-k through 8.

Parents/guardians are requested to call this "Student Absence Line" 609-806-4266 (Press 4 for RS) before 8:45 a.m. on the day of absence with the following information: your child's first/last name, your child's grade, your child's home address, the date(s) your child will be absent, and the reason for your child's absence.

The school will match your call with the absentee reporting system. If there is no record of a call to report your child's absence, we will contact you regarding your child's absence. Your cooperation is necessary for the procedure to be implemented effectively. Please be sure to call 609-806-4266 whenever your child will be late or absent from school.

LUNCHTIME

School Lunches:

Lunch is served in the school cafeteria each day, including half days. Lunch menus are distributed on a monthly basis to help you and your child determine when to buy and when to prepare a lunch at home.

Every student is issued a PIN number account. You may prepay your child's lunch by depositing funds in your child's lunch account by sending a check to Riverside, payable to the Princeton Regional Schools Lunch Fund. You may stop by the cafeteria during school hours to pay in person if you wish. Please add to the account as needed. The Main Office does not loan lunch money.

Ice cream and snack food must be purchased with cash. Students may purchase only one ice cream or snack item per day.

Your child may be eligible for free or reduced cost lunches. Eligibility is determined by filling out the appropriate application which is available in the Main Office.

Lunch/Recess Behaviour:

Our students are encouraged to make their own decision as to where they would like to eat in the lunchroom. Since the lunch/recess period is 50 minutes long, we request that students spend at least fifteen minutes of that time eating and informally conversing with classmates. We encourage proper table manners within an informal and friendly atmosphere. Running or other inappropriate behaviour is not permitted. All students are expected to dispose of their trash properly and leave the eating area clean for the next person. Teaching assistants are available to assist and monitor the children in the lunchroom and on the playground. Our lunch/recess staff is responsible for supervising our students during this period. We stagger the lunch periods to reduce the number of students in the cafeteria and on the playground.

On the Playground:

Safety and having fun go hand-in-hand on the playground. We encourage our students to enjoy the play area and its equipment. There are several rules students must follow:

1. *Our playground has a "no contact games" rule. Simply stated, this means tackle football, aggressive games, or the like cannot be part of a student's play at Riverside.*

2. *We ask instead, that students play small group or team games that do not require physical contact. Soccer is great. Individual and cooperative activities are encouraged. Our staff will make equipment available to students.*

Riverside's physical education teacher devotes numerous class periods per year toward educating students in the proper and safe use of all play equipment. Classroom teachers, the building principal, and lunchtime staff also support this effort. Students learn how to use each piece of equipment safely. They know not to run in the wooded area where the heavy equipment is located and they know not to interfere with other students as they climb or negotiate the equipment. The physical education teacher also reminds all students to wear sneakers or rubber-soled shoes while on the playground. We stress that proper footwear is particularly important when playing on the asphalt areas or climbing structures.

Each year we need to emphasize that "gangs", "cliques", and "teams" that organize and chase others about the playground are not permitted. We find that our younger students are drawn at some point in the year to this activity. While they may see it as fun, such activity usually becomes disturbing to others and causes problems.

Indoor Recess:

Recess is held in the classroom when weather is inclement. Children are expected to engage in quiet games and activities. Classrooms are supervised by the lunch/recess staff.

Our staff is there to supervise play and do all that is possible to maintain a safe play environment. Should students not follow the rules as outlined above, they may be asked to sit out for a recess period. The lunchtime staff will also speak with the classroom teacher whenever a problem with a student occurs. If the student continues to demonstrate inappropriate behaviors, the staff will bring the youngster to the attention of the principal. The principal will confer with the student, teacher, and recess supervisor in order to determine the most appropriate response. Parents will be notified of our concern should it be necessary.

BUS TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY RULES

The Board policy on transportation reflects the district's concern for the safety of its children. Transportation to and from school will be provided for elementary students who live more than two miles from school or if a route has been designated as hazardous. For further information, call the Transportation Coordinator, Donna Bradin, at 806-4209. Students who misbehave or compromise the safety of others will be disciplined by both the bus driver and the principal. Loss of riding privilege **can result** depending on the severity or frequency of the problem. Please discuss proper bus conduct with your child. Should they experience a problem on the bus, remind them to notify the bus driver when the bus has stopped at home or school. Students should also share their concern with their teacher and principal. We ask for your assistance as we continue to do our best to insure safe transportation for our students.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Health Office is a resource for parents and children and actively supports the concept of participatory health care. Princeton Board of Education requires students to have periodic physical exams by a primary care physician. All kindergarteners, third grade students and new students entering the district are required to have physical exams. Physical exam reports will be accepted if within one year of their start date.

Screenings:

The Health office conducts health screening as required by the NJ Department of Education: Screening for height, weight and blood pressure will be conducted annually for each student in Kindergarten through grade 5.

Screening for visual acuity will be conducted biennially for students in Kindergarten through grade 5.

Screening for auditory acuity will be conducted annually for students in Kindergarten through grade 3.

Screening for scoliosis will be conducted for students in grade 5. These screenings take place in late spring and parents will be notified prior to their child's screening.

Parents/guardians of students whose results deviate from the established guidelines will be notified and advised to contact their physician.

Immunizations: State law also requires all children attending school in New Jersey to be vaccinated against certain vaccine-preventable diseases. All pupils attending New Jersey schools are required to show proof of immunization against the following diseases: diphtheria, tetanus, mumps, pertussis, poliomyelitis, rubella (German measles), rubeola (red measles), varicella and Hepatitis B. Pre-K students are required to have an annual influenza vaccination prior to December 31st.

All children new to the district from high incidence countries must provide evidence of a tuberculin test. New Jersey mandates that only a Mantoux (PPD) or IGRA may be accepted as a valid tuberculin test. All children must have the required immunizations before starting school.

We receive updates on a regular basis from the State Commissioner of Health. Additional information regarding immunizations will be communicated through our weekly newsletter or directly from Riverside's Health Office.

In-School Accidents, Illnesses or Emergencies:

If your child suffers an accident or becomes ill while at school, our nurse will administer first aid and, if the matter seems to be more than routine, the nurse will notify you. We **do not** allow sick pupils to walk or take the bus home; nor are we equipped to keep ill youngsters in school.

Since no care beyond first aid can be provided, it is very important that parents return the EMERGENCY CARD sent home each September and update this information as needed so parents can be contacted immediately. Should parents be away and their child remains in

school, please let the Health Office know who can be contacted in case of an emergency. This person should be able to make decisions for your child's medical care in your absence. The health office cannot be expected to monitor your child for more than 1 hour. **Please make sure a parent or guardian is able to respond within the hour of notification.**

Illness: A day at home is advised if your child demonstrates general signs of illness. Headache, nausea, listlessness, and earache are such signs. Skin rashes, sores, swollen glands, and sore throat may require medical attention. Children with elevated oral temperatures will be sent home according to the following criteria:

1. **Oral temperatures between 98.6 F. and 100 F.** The child should be sent home if there are other symptoms reported by the child or observed by the nurse.
2. **Oral temperature above 100 F.** The child will be sent home even if no other symptoms are reported or apparent.

Recommendations to parents

1. **WARNING - Children should not use aspirin for flu symptoms before a doctor is consulted. A rare but serious illness, Reye's Syndrome, has been reported to be associated with aspirin when given to children for flu symptoms.**

2. Keep children home for 24 hours following the establishment of a normal temperature. We do not allow sick children to walk home and we are not equipped to keep ill children at school.

3. If your child has evidence of a rash, or red draining eyes, he/she may not come to school unless a doctor's note is provided stating he/she is non-communicable.

Medications:

The school nurse or a child's parent/guardian are the only individuals authorized to dispense medication in the school and on school trips. Children are not allowed to carry their own medication. All medications must be locked in the school Health Office. Rules for medication apply to prescription **and** non-prescription medicines and can be given **only** if the following three-step procedure is completed:

1. Written order is received from the family physician.
2. Permission is received from the parent/guardian.
3. The medication is in the original container and labelled with child's name.

If your child has an allergic or asthmatic condition which might cause difficulty, we require that the **emergency** medication be kept at school. Parent's must provide the health office with their child's individual rescue inhaler or epi-pen, along with the medical order. Class trip permissions should be given with the preceding information in mind. **Should you have any question about self-medication or how these procedures may apply to your child's needs, please call the school nurse or the principal.**

Special Circumstances:

The Health Office requests that temporary or permanent physical needs that may affect a child's school program and/or well-being be communicated to the school nurse. Physical education and recess restrictions need to be requested in writing by a parent for up to three days absence from the activity. If the restriction is greater than three days a note must come from a physician.

The reason and time period should be included. The general policy is that children who return to school after being ill should be well enough to participate fully in the school program.

Injuries at Home:

We respectfully request that parents treat at home injuries that occur there. It's inappropriate and not medically sound to expect our school nurse to deal with events that don't occur at school and to delay treatment for that purpose.

If a child has an injury at home that requires a sling, splint, cast, crutches or a wheelchair student's must have a note from their treating physician in order to return to school. This note should include recess and physical education guidelines and long term follow up plan. Please notify the school nurse if your child has any restrictions, before entering the classroom.

Communicable Disease and Conditions:

Parents are requested to inform the Health Office of any communicable disease or condition. Some of the more common diseases are chicken pox, "strep" throat, influenza, and fifth's disease. Measles - regular and rubella (German), mumps, and scarlet fever are less common, but **must** be reported. Children with chicken pox need to be out of school for seven days from the onset of the illness and all scabs must be dry. Additionally, they must report to the Health Office before returning to the classroom.

Ringworm, scabies, and impetigo are communicable conditions that require exclusion from school and appropriate remedies.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION

Problems, Questions, Concerns:

Parents should contact **teachers** when they have any problems, questions, or concerns regarding their child's educational program or needs. It is important that issues regarding student performance and/or concerns about classroom decisions be discussed first with the teacher. Call the Main Office at 806-4260 to request a teacher conference. More generalized issues should be referred to the Principal's Office.

Telephone Calls:

Students are permitted to contact home in an emergency or when given permission by a staff member. Students should report to the Main Office and the office staff will place the call. Messages to students from their parents may be conveyed by calling the Main Office (806-4260). As a rule, students are not permitted to carry cell phones. Should a special need require your child to hold a phone, contact the main office for assistance and approvals.

Weekly Newsletter:

On Fridays, the Riverside Newsletter is emailed to all parents who are registered with PowerSchool and it is also posted on the Riverside website. Since the "Riverside Newsletter" contains information on school, PTO, and community events and meetings, as well as important information about school programs, we encourage you to check your email and the Riverside website for this information. We make every effort to coordinate information for the newsletter in an effective manner. The main office has copies of the newsletter available if you do not have a computer.

If you or your organization has an item you believe will be of interest to the RS community, please submit it to our secretary at least one week prior to the requested publication date. We will forward your request to District offices at Valley Road. Upon the District's approval of the item, we will be pleased to publish it for you.

Lost and Found:

Lost and Found items are taken to bins in the all-purpose room to be reclaimed by you or your child. A large assortment of mittens, hats, lunch boxes, and other items accumulates throughout the year. Unclaimed articles are donated to charity at the end of the school year. The PTO coordinates our Lost and Found efforts.

Student Personal Items:

Personal hand held technology game products should not be in school. Potential loss of these items can place great stress on the child and cause disruption to the classroom.

SCHOLASTIC INFORMATION

Homework:

Homework is intended to encourage critical thinking, problem solving, and to reinforce classroom learning. Expectations are related to the grade and academic level of each child. Parents should contact the teacher directly concerning the nature or quantity of homework. You can help by providing a quiet, well-lighted place at home for study without interruption.

Report Cards:

Progress reports for grade TWO will be sent home twice a year (March and June). The symbols used in the marking system reflect individual progress, achievement, and effort at the student's academic level. Student's progress is reported individually and not in relation to the progress of others. The developmental grading key and descriptors are: I (Independent), P (Progressing), B (Beginning), & OC (Of Concern).

Report cards for grade THREE will be sent home twice a year (March and June). The symbols used in the marking system reflect individual progress, achievement and effort. Specific skills are graded with + (Area of Strength), {S} (Satisfactory), * (Area of Concern) and N/A (Not Applicable). The academic evaluation key is denoted by the numbers 4, 3, 2, & 1 and is a summary of the student's performance in each academic area.

Report cards for grade FOUR and FIVE will be sent home three times a year (December, March and June). Specific skills are graded with + (Area of Strength), { } (Satisfactory), * (Area of Concern), and N/A (Not applicable). The academic evaluation key is denoted by the numbers 4, 3, 2, & 1 and is a summary of the student's performance in each academic area.

No report cards are issued for first grade and kindergarten students. Formal parent conferences are scheduled to address student progress.

Conferences:

Parent conferences are planned for the fall and spring. Please refer to the district calendar for specific dates and times. Additional conferences are encouraged between parents and teachers and should be arranged by either party whenever it is felt necessary. Telephone messages given to the secretary will be conveyed to teachers who will return calls as soon as possible. It is important that such appointments be made in advance to insure adequate time for a thorough discussion and to prevent the disruption of classroom instruction.

Back to School Night:

Back to School Night is held early in the year. Parents will have the opportunity to meet their child's teachers and other support staff. Teachers give an overview of their curriculum and programs while discussing such topics as classroom procedures and homework policy. This is not the time for discussions about individual students. A conference time for this purpose may be arranged between the teacher and parents.

Placement Procedure:

Our Riverside staff has designed a thorough process by which students are placed in classes. The individual student is carefully considered as staff meet in May and June to make placements. While attending to the individual student, we strive to develop heterogeneous groups of students who will work well together. While our policy is not to accept requests for specific teachers, we do invite parents to describe their children as learners. Parents may use a portion of the spring conference to discuss placement and/or may write a letter to the principal. Details for the letter will be sent home in May.

School Records:

Students' records are maintained which include name, address, birth date, attendance, health history, academic performance, and any other pertinent information. These records may be reviewed by the parent or guardian upon request. A member of the school staff will interpret and explain these records.

Support Services:

Support Services: A variety of services and staff are available to serve students, parents, and staff at Riverside School.

A group of certified professionals called the Child Study Team (CST) are among the staff that supports the educational experience here at Riverside. The purpose of the CST is to work collaboratively with parents and staff to help all students be successful learners.

The CST provides a wide range of services for all the school's students. The core team is made up of a psychologist, learning consultant, and social worker. The psychologist consults with staff and parents, counsels students, and provides crisis intervention services. The learning consultant consults with teachers and administrators, reviews and modifies curriculum, and provides information on resources to ensure each child's academic success. The social worker counsels students and parents, establishes liaisons with community agencies, and consults with school staff. All members of the CST provide training and workshops to staff and parents as needed.

The Child Study Team meets regularly with staff to find ways to help individual children become more successful in their learning. Many general education and special education options are explored. When special education may be an option, a CST evaluation will be conducted

with parental permission. The CST members, in partnership with parents, work to design and monitor appropriate programming for students eligible for special education and related services. Questions about special education can be directed to any member of the CST.

The Intervention and Referral Services (I & RS) team also serves students at Riverside. The school guidance counselor coordinates this team in partnership with the principal. Members of this team include teachers, guidance counselor, CST members, and the building principal. This is a problem-solving team designed to help staff develop strategies and interventions to meet the academic and social needs of each child. Parents are informed prior to discussion of any Riverside student by the I & RS team. Questions about the I & RS team should be directed to the guidance counselor or the principal.

World Languages:

Students in grades 3-5 will receive daily instruction by a certified teacher of Spanish.

English as a Second Language (ESL):

Classes are available at three levels of instruction (Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced) for students whose primary language is not English. A Writing Lab using word processing on computers is available to advanced students. Classes meet in small groups each day for thirty minutes and are designed to support the learning of academic skills in the regular classroom.

Accelerated Intervention Services Program:

Students in need of support in the areas of literacy (phonemic awareness, reading, writing) and/or mathematics are eligible to receive instruction and/or support from the Riverside Accelerated Intervention Services team (AIS). Children's eligibility for AIS is determined by multiple measures including student's performance on daily classwork, teacher recommendation and benchmark assessments or state assessments. Parents are notified by either the classroom teacher or AIS staff when their children become eligible for AIS instruction or support. Support services can occur as an in-class support model, pull-out small group instruction or one to one instruction. Typically, students receive a combination of these supports. The AIS teachers and general ed. classroom teachers cooperatively develop an ISAP, Individual Student Acceleration Plan which outlines the level of support and frequency of instruction. These plans are monitored and updated periodically. Children that demonstrate a level of proficiency to perform independently at grade level in the classroom will receive reduced levels of support until both the AIS teachers and the classroom teacher feel the student will maintain current levels of success.

Field Trips:

Our students experience a variety of out-of-class activities throughout their years at Riverside. Teachers will send field trip permission forms for you to sign whenever a bus trip is planned for outside the district. A blanket permission slip is sent out at the start of the school year to cover all walking and in-district field trips. Please let the classroom teacher know of your interest in being a chaperone on a class trip. Should additional adult supervision be required, the classroom teacher will contact you.

Library Policy:

Our school library is open daily. Students, staff and parents may borrow books for a two-week lending period with renewals possible. Overdue books do not incur fines, but please help us foster consideration of others by returning library books promptly. The library website

provides links to online resources including our library catalog, ebook sites, and databases. Students who need additional reading material or assistance with research may visit the library during non-instructional time with permission of their teacher. We also invite parents to support the library as part of our "volunteer" team. Please contact our librarian to discuss your interests.

Vacations:

The Princeton Regional School's academic calendar provides opportunities for families to vacation during the school year without interruption of the learning program. We encourage our parents to plan vacations with the calendar in mind. Should family vacations conflict with the academic calendar, we recommend that the student's learning program be a combination of the family experiences and the opportunities created at the vacation site. Teachers are not obligated to prepare a "homestudy" program when students are vacationing.

RIVERSIDE PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION

Welcome to the Riverside School Parent-Teacher Organization (the "PTO")

Who We Are: The PTO is a group of caring volunteers dedicated to enhancing the educational experience of Riverside students through a variety of programs and services. If you are the parent or guardian of a child in Riverside School, you are already a member!

Our Mission:

Through our collective efforts, we strive to: *enrich* our children's educational experience; *support* our dedicated staff and administration; *strengthen* our Riverside community; and *teach* our children the value of community service.

What We Do:

In 2015-2016, nearly two-thirds of our \$30,000 budget funded enrichment programs such as: A garden residency for all students in the school hosted in our organic garden classrooms; A movement residency for the first grade; a storytelling/performance residency; McCarter Theatre poetry/performance residencies for the third, fourth and fifth grades; All-school assemblies including the Franklin Institute show for Science Week and special assembly with jugglers for the last day of school.

The PTO also purchases homework planners and folders for all Riverside students each year and provides over \$4000 for teacher support (i.e. class events, yearbook, choral and instrumental concerts, classroom technology, appreciation luncheons for staff, kindergarten Grandpals program and teacher mini-grants).

In addition, the PTO provided volunteers and financial support for:

New family orientation, Science, Art, and Garden After School Clubs; School picnics in fall, winter, and spring; Pasta night dinner; Pancake Breakfast; Holiday cookie boxes for the staff; Scholastic book fair with a free book for each Riverside child; the Art Show; and, 5th Grade Gettysburg trip and Moving On Ceremony.

The PTO also organized and/or supported:

The “Digging-In” garden fundraiser/community event; “International Night”, a cultural education event; “Authors’ Night” for our budding authors; Science Day filled with fun experiments and engaging activities; Party Boards (in conjunction with Pasta Night), a fundraiser offering sign-ups for fun community-building family, student, and parent activities; UNICEF, food, winter clothing and backpack drives; and a book swap for our kids, with a book donation to others in need.

What You Can Do: To make all of this happen, we need your:

1. ***Ideas & suggestions*** → share an idea for a new event, club or other program, or tell us about what is working or what could be improved.
2. ***Time & Talents*** → if you can spare even one or two hours, it can make a big difference in terms of what we can do for our children. Volunteer opportunities abound to fit every schedule, day and night, including class parent, library volunteer, garden volunteer, cook or baker, event coordinator, website guru, spirit-wear manager, or McCaffrey’s receipt-counter (night owls take note!). Contact us, and we’ll find the right job for you! Feel good and get to know your kids’ teachers, friends, and other parents. It can mean so much to your child to see you involved in their school experience. Even if you can’t volunteer, simply attending and enjoying our events with your family can help strengthen our school community.
3. ***Financial Support*** → suggested annual dues of \$35 per child, together with funds raised and donations, go directly to support your child’s learning experience through residencies, assemblies, classroom supplies and other programs. The PTO spends ~\$100 per child on programs and services. As the PTO is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, donations are tax deductible. If your employer has a matching gift program, please utilize it when making your donation. Check out <http://www.rspto.org/fundraising> to see how 1% of your McCaffrey’s and Amazon purchases can support our school. Dues checks can be sent in your child’s folder or left in the PTO box at the front office.

How to Volunteer/Learn More: Contact PTO Co-President Beth Leman at the following email: president@rspto.org. You can also join us at our monthly PTO meetings or leave suggestions, questions, or dues payments in the PTO mailbox in the front office.

Watch for weekly PTO news on the “Riverside Newsletter” emailed and posted on the Riverside website; for lots more information, including specific volunteer opportunities, check out our website at: www.rspto.org.