



Capitol Hill Cluster School
Where Every Child Achieves
Peabody | Watkins | Stuart-Hobson | A DC Public School

MScott Berkowitz
Principal

Ebon McPherson
Assistant Principal

La-Tarsha James
Assistant Principal

Tanisha Montgomery
Director of Strategy & Logistics

Dr. Khristina Pullings
Manager of Specialized Instruction

Dear Peabody and Watkins Panthers!

I am so proud and excited for another year of rigorous and joyful learning experiences at Peabody and Watkins! Building on the success of last year, we will continue our focus on creating a safe, welcoming, and inclusive school community where every student and family feels a deep sense of safety and belonging. Through strong staff-student relationships and instruction that challenges and supports every learner, we are committed to ensuring all students thrive in an environment where they feel valued and empowered to succeed. I'm thrilled to begin this new school year and look forward to the many opportunities we have to partner to ensure a fulfilling year ***where every child achieves!***

Before the First Day Opportunities to Connect

Watkins Panther Academy – August 10, 4pm. New to Watkins students and families (including all 1st graders) are welcome to join us for a fun-filled orientation with the Culture Team (students) and Leadership Team (caregivers).

Peabody Playdate – August 11, 3:30pm. All Peabody students and families are welcome to gather on the playground with me, AP James and other staff. We will take a quick tour of the building, but mostly spend time connecting!

Sneak a Peek of your classroom. Caregivers and students will be welcomed into the school building to preview their classroom, say hello (briefly) to their teachers, and talk with classmates - new and old. **Watkins:** August 20, 2:30pm-3:30pm. **Peabody:** August 21, 9am-10am. **Come with your child's classroom supplies to drop in the classroom.** Supply lists can be found on our website: <https://www.capitolhillclusterschool.org/2026-27-school-year>

All K-5 students will start on August 24.

All PreK students will start on August 27.

NEW THIS YEAR: Mandatory Student Dismissal Authorization Form is printed in this mailer. All students are required to return a complete form as soon as possible. A separate form is required for each student and can be found here: <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/elementary-student-dismissal>

Before and aftercare sign-ups are now open at both schools. See <https://www.capitolhillclusterschool.org/before-after-care> to sign up now. Aftercare will start on the first day of school. Before care starts the second day at both campuses.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures are unique to each campus. More details can be found in their respective Arrival and Dismissal documents, located in the mailer and on our school's website.

- Peabody: doors open at 8:20am, class starts at 8:45. Dismissal is between 3:10pm-3:20pm.
 - o **Pre-K:** Families are expected to escort their child to the classroom each morning throughout the school year.
 - Kindergarten:** Students are encouraged to walk to their classroom independently. Caregivers should say good-bye at the classroom door and may not enter the classroom. Please note that a valid photo ID is required to enter the building.
- Watkins: doors open at 8:20am, class starts at 8:45am. Dismissal begins 3:15pm and ends at 3:30.
 - o On the first day and every day, caregivers should plan to say goodbye to their child at the front door to the school. Caregivers are not permitted to walk their child to their classroom.





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School meals: Watkins students will receive free meals (breakfast, lunch, and after-school snack). Peabody students will continue to receive free breakfast and afterschool snack; **however, lunch will cost \$3.00 for students who do not qualify for free and reduced meals.** Applications for Free and Reduced Meals can be found here:

<https://dcps.dc.gov/farm>. At Peabody only, students participating in school meals, who do not qualify for free lunch, must have a LINQ Connect account. Create an account at <https://linqconnect.com> and select register. Students' meal accounts function as debit accounts. A LINQ Connect account is not required for Watkins students, as all students receive free meals.

If your child requires **dietary accommodations**, please complete and submit their form to dietary.forms@k12.dc.gov. Please also notify your child's teacher. DCPS Food and Nutrition Services does not require a new form each school year. Please visit <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/dietary-accommodations> for more information.

Caregivers **should not send lunch to school via delivery services**, nor should caregivers expect that school staff can heat up lunch. We do not have the capacity to honor those requests. Lunches sent via delivery services will not be accepted.

Whenever possible, administer medications at home. If your child needs **access to medications or medical treatment during school hours**, please complete the following steps:

1. Have your medical provider complete the appropriate forms – [Medication and Treatment Authorization Forms](#), the [Asthma Action Plan](#) and the [Action Plan for Anaphylaxis](#). These forms are available from your school's main office and online: <https://dcps.dc.gov/node/1003562>.
2. **Drop off the medicine and required paperwork to the school nurse.** In the nurse's absence, they can be turned into Ms. Carraway at Watkins and Ms. Shields at Peabody. Medications will not be accepted without the appropriate paperwork.
3. **Communicate** your child's medical needs to their homeroom teacher. Please note that your child will not be able to receive medication during the school day (including on field trips) until steps 1 and 2 have been completed.

Last year, [DCPS enacted restrictions on personal devices](#). Personal devices may not be used during the school day by students without approval. At Watkins, all cellphones and personal electronic communication devices will be collected at the door. At Peabody, student devices will need to be turned off and stored in their backpacks.

Families will receive a welcome email from their teacher with important information during the week of August 17th.

I hope all our Panthers have a fantastic last few weeks of summer! We are so excited to welcome you back to Peabody and Watkins on August 24! For more information about the upcoming school year, please [visit our website](#). We will have a fantastic school year together!

In service,
Principal Berkowitz

