

AES Panther Press

September 26, 2025

From the Principal's Press Box....

We are reaching the end of September. It is the official midpoint of Quarter 1. It's a great time to check in on your child's academic progress and overall well-being. Please remember that our school does not issue interim reports, so it is very important to regularly check Canvas for up-to-date information on assignments, grades, and teacher feedback.

Our AES staff are here to support your child's growth and success, and maintaining open communication is key to this partnership. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's performance, assignments, or classroom experiences, we encourage you to reach out to your child's teachers. This dialogue not only helps us address any concerns early on but also ensures we can work together to support your child in achieving their goals.

We would like to thank all of our AES PTA who provided our staff with a yummy Caramel Apple Bar. It was fabulous! What a delightful treat! Thank you for all you do!

Warm Regards,

Ms. Malcotti, Principal
Ms. Tracy, Assistant Principal

IMPORTANT DATES

- **September 29:** Map Testing Gr 4 & Gr 5-Math
- **September 30:** Map Testing Gr1-Reading
- **October 1:** Gr3 FT to Howard County Conservancy
- **October 1:** Map Testing Gr2-Reading
- **October 1:** PTA Restaurant Night at California Tortilla ([flier](#)).
- **October 2:** Schools and Offices Closed
- **October 6:** Map Testing Gr4-Reading
- **October 8:** Map Testing Gr5-Reading
- **October 8:** PTA Meeting (Virtual)
- **October 9:** Map Testing Gr3-Reading

- **October 14:** Fall Individual Pictures
- **October 17:** Schools Closed
- **October 21-24:** PTA Book Fair
- **October 31:** End of 1st Quarter
- **October 31:** 3 Hr Early Dismissal. No School for PS classes (Ms. Mollie and Ms. Shannon)

[2025-2026 related arts color day calendar](#)

Hot Off the Presses! (new content since the last Panther Press)

Free Flu Clinics

Free flu clinics are available through the Howard County Health Department. Please [click here to view the flier](#) for dates and times of the free flu clinics.

From The Health Room:

Not sure if your child should stay home? See the diagram below for guidance.

Sick Kids: When to Stay Home from School

FEVER <small>A temperature of 100° or higher</small>	COUGHING THAT WON'T STOP <small>Or other problems with breathing</small>	DIARRHEA OR VOMITING <small>Within the past 24 hours</small>	RASH <small>Body rash with itching and/or fever</small>	HEAD LICE <small>Itchy head, active head lice</small>	EYE INFECTION <small>Eye is red and oozing a yellow or green discharge</small>
					
When to Return to School					
Fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen	Cough is mild and infrequent and evaluated by doctor if needed	Free from diarrhea and/or vomiting for at least 24 hours and evaluated by doctor if needed	Free from rash, itching or fever and evaluated by doctor if needed	After first head lice treatment	24 hours after starting antibiotic eye drops or ointment

HC DrugFree Updates (9-23-2025)

Parenting Classes:

Free! On Zoom and open to parents, guardians and grandparents residing in HoCo or with school-age children/grandchildren residing in HoCo. Evidence-based, interactive prevention program that provides families with the skills and knowledge to reduce the risk that their children will use drugs and alcohol or engage in other dangerous behaviors. The curriculum was written for families with children 9-14 years old, but it is appropriate for K-12 families. Class dates: November 11, 13, 18, 20 and December 2 from Noon to 1:30 p.m. on Zoom. Visit HC DrugFree's website for more information and register at <https://tinyurl.com/GGC-Fall2025>

Drive-Thru Medication Disposal:

Saturday, October 25 in the Wilde Lake Village Center Parking Lot near the Swim Center from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Safely dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medication, vitamins, pet meds, vape devices, inhalers, and more. Unlike previous events, we will not collect sharps (needles, syringes and EpiPens). Need student, adult, and medically-trained adult volunteers. Earn Community Service Hours! Giving away 100 medication lockboxes. For more information and to volunteer visit HC DrugFree's website: <https://hcdrugfree.org/drug-take-back-day-1/>

Teen Advisory Council:

Open to Howard County students in grades 8-12. Earn Community Service Hours and make meaningful contributions to the community. Next meeting: Monday September 29, 2025 from 5:30-7:00pm on Zoom. Earn Community Service Hours. Register to receive the meeting link: <https://forms.gle/SgMrjdeo11JpNuuV8> For more information, visit HC DrugFree's website: <https://hcdrugfree.org/teen-advisory-council/>

Free Newsletter:

Stay up to date with HC DrugFree's free events offering Community Service Hours to HoCo students, resources, and a variety of substance use and behavioral health information! Sign up for HC DrugFree's free digital newsletter: <https://hcdrugfree.org/enews-signup/>

Empowered Online - Tools & Tips for Raising Responsible Digital Citizens

Join the Office of Instructional Technology & Library Media for an informative session where you will discover the HCPSS Digital Citizenship Curriculum and explore effective ways to support your student(s) as they navigate and thrive in an increasingly digital world. [Click here](#) for the flyer. This virtual event is designed for families with elementary-aged students and will be held on Wednesday, October 8, from 6:30-7:30 pm, via Google Meet. [Click here](#) to register. Direct questions to Julie Wray at julie_wray@hcpss.org.

Howard Community College's Third Annual FREE Fall for All Event

Howard Community College is thrilled to be hosting our third annual FREE Fall for All event on Friday, October 17, from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. on our downtown Columbia campus.

With HCPSS schools being closed, HCC wanted to invite the community, especially those with younger children and those looking for fun, family-friendly fall activities.

From inflatables to crafts, to games and activities, the event has been structured with community members of all ages in mind. Food will be available for purchase from a variety of local food trucks. New for this year's event, we are highlighting our dedicated public safety professionals, connecting guests with representatives from Maryland and Howard County law enforcement, fire departments, and other local agencies.

More information about the event is available at [HowardCC.Edu/FallForAll](https://www.howardcc.edu/fallforall) or on our [HCPSS Community Program Listing](#).

Worth Mentioning Again

Back to School Night Info

It was great seeing so many of you at this week's Back to School Nights! Please use the links below to access an Information for Families document provided by HCPSS with links to several resources you may need over the course of the school year.

[Back to School Night Info - English](#)

[Back to School Night Info - Spanish](#)

[GT Fall Family Information Night](#)

Community Resources Newsletter

The newsletter [linked here](#) provides valuable information and resources for students and families in Howard County, MD. It covers topics such as housing assistance, child care financial aid, food pantry locations, and upcoming events. The content is designed to help those in need access the support they require.

This information is not sponsored or endorsed by HCPSS, but services to extend resources for students and families.

Recess Items

Thank you to our amazing Atholton Elementary PTA for providing funds for us to replenish our recess equipment for the year!

If you have any items that your children no longer use at home that you would like to donate to the school for use during recess, we'd be happy to take them! Students are not permitted to play football, so please...no footballs. Indoor recess items such as

coloring books, puzzles, games (with all the pieces, please!), blocks, legos, magna tiles, etc would also be greatly appreciated.

Information from the Green School Team:

Atholton will continue our "Think Before You Throw Thursdays" this year. Our goal is to encourage our students and staff to use more reusable items throughout their day, so we throw away less. We also invite students to wear something GREEN if they wish, every Thursday, to remind themselves to be GREEN! Our first "Think Before You Throw Thursday" for this school year will be on September 19.

HCPSS Volunteer Training SY25-26

Confidentiality Agreement for Conducting Classroom, Visits/Observations, and Volunteer/Chaperone Opportunities is now ONLINE!

Please complete the online training by reviewing the [training slides](#) on the HCPSS website. Afterwards, you do not have to print out anything; just fill out the [Google Form here](#), and this will count as your required documents. Or scan the QR code below:



Arrival and Dismissal and Buses at AES

Please review the Arrival and Dismissal Procedures for Atholton ES that can be found [here](#). It is important that everyone in the community follow these guidelines to ensure a safe start and end to our school days.

We wanted to highlight a couple of issues that came up today to clarify our procedures.

- During arrival, please follow the directions of staff members at the front of the building to ensure everyone's safety. Do not pass buses or other vehicles on Seneca Drive.

- During dismissal, no cars are allowed in the bus loop. All car riders are picked up behind the school. If your car is in the loop during dismissal, you will need to wait to leave until the buses have been dismissed. Backing out of the loop is not a safe alternative.
- We received calls from community members today about cars being parked illegally on others' property in a way that made it impossible for them to get out of their driveways. Please be respectful and park legally to avoid being ticketed or towed.

For our bus riders, we will have 9 buses providing transportation for AES this school year. Some of the buses have a 3-digit number, and all of our Zum buses have a 6-digit number. To make it easier for us to communicate with students and families about buses, we will be using numbers listed below. Please remember, if your child rides a Zum bus and you are looking for information on the Zum app, you will need to use the full 6-digit number. Information about how to download the Zum app can be found below.

Bus 453
Bus 870
Zum Bus 233004 = BUS 4
Zum Bus 233214 = BUS 214
Zum Bus 233221 = BUS 221
Zum Bus 233229 = BUS 229
Zum Bus 233246 = BUS 246
Zum Bus 234276 = BUS 276
Zum Bus 234281 = BUS 281

Thank you for your patience as we begin another great year!

Zum App

Using the app will allow you to track your child's bus in real-time, receive pick-up notifications if you choose, and view the driver for each ride.

To start using the Zum app, please follow these instructions:

1. [Download the app-](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/zum-student-transportation/id1076430968)
<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/zum-student-transportation/id1076430968>
2. Log in to your account with the phone number or email address you have listed on your child's record in [Family File in HCPSS Connect](#).
3. Verify your access by entering the one-time code sent to your device.
4. Check the notification settings to ensure you're receiving Zum notifications, if desired, so you'll know when the bus is approaching and when your child has arrived at school.

Learning Together Program

The Atholton Elementary Early Childhood Classes are ***still looking*** for peers for the 2025-2026 school year. We are accepting applications for general education students to participate as peers through the Learning Together Program (LTP). These classes include general education and special education students. The program's focus is helping all children develop communication, literacy, math, problem solving, motor, and social skills. Parents of children who will be 3 by September 1st, applications are now being accepted. Please contact the front office for more information.

In alignment with Maryland's Blueprint for the Future, new LTP applications for students turning 4 by ***September 1 will not be available***. The Howard County Public School System continues to offer Prekindergarten for income eligible children who will be 4 years old by September 1. For additional information contact the school or visit: <https://www.hcpss.org/schools/pre-k-programs/>

Howard County Recreation & Parks - Fall 2025 Before & After School Classes

Did you know there are after school programs offered at AES and run through Howard County Parks and Recs? [Please see this flier](#) for this fall's offerings. These classes provide fun, structured, educational, and enriching activities for students on site at Atholton ES, benefitting both the child(ren) and parents! [Click on this link to register.](#)

AES Website and Calendar

Please bookmark the [Atholton ES Website](#) to keep up-to-date with the latest information! Also, the elementary related arts calendar is available to subscribe to. So you can keep track of RYOGB days! [Click here for HCPSS directions](#) on how to add a calendar.

FAMILY FILES - please update ASAP

[Español](#) | [中文](#) | [한국어](#)

HCPSS utilizes Family File for families to complete emergency information. Parents/guardians must verify and/or update information for each child each school year.

Please note that *some resources within HCPSS Connect Synergy are not yet available for the 2025-2026 school year*, including homerooms, teachers and schedules; and bus transportation assignments. Parents/guardians are only asked to complete Family File at this time.

Several updates have been made to Family File, including how and where to access. Parents/guardians can now [access and complete Family File](#) by logging in to HCPSS

Connect Synergy, selecting the Online Registration at the top right of the page and then selecting Family File Verification.

Once logged in, parents/guardians will be asked to update or provide the following: family information; parent/guardian contact; emergency contact(s); and student information, including health information, PTA/PTSA directory inclusion, release of information, science agreement, and arrival/dismissal procedures.

New this year, Family File includes a Secondary Science Safety Agreement, a comprehensive Information Release section, and the ability to submit a change of address.

- **Change of Address:** Families who have recently moved will [submit necessary documentation](#) when completing Family File, rather than the previous process of completing in the school.
 - In the Family section, select the checkbox if your address has changed, and enter the updated address and the date of the deed/lease change.
 - After submitting your change of address, a staff member from your child's school will contact you to finalize details relating to your submission.
- **Science Safety Agreement:** Formerly a paper that middle and high school students brought home for parents/guardians to sign and return to school, this is now available in Family File. The [full agreement can be found online](#) and parents/guardians will acknowledge the agreement in the Family File Student Information section.
- **Information Release:** Permission options for the release of information have not changed, however for easier use, these now are found in one location. Releases include media (photo use), data confidentiality, and student creative work.

[Resources on completing Family File](#) may be found online. Answers to frequently asked questions on [Family File](#) and on [HCPSS Connect](#) are available on the HCPSS Help site.

Refrigerator Page

Please use the [Refrigerator Page Link](#) for information about lunch schedules, testing windows, musical performance dates, etc.

Free and Reduced Meals - check your eligibility today!

Students whose families do not qualify for free or reduced lunch will be required to pay the [daily meal price](#). Many HCPSS families are eligible to participate in the Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARMS) program, which provides children with a wide range of benefits, including free or discounted college tuition, testing and application fees, academic and athletic program fees, and many others, in addition to free or discounted meals. Families are urged to check their eligibility and complete a FARMS application as soon as possible. **Families must submit a new application every school year.**

[Details on the Free and Reduced Meals program](#), including a link to apply, are available online.

Student Absences

All absence notes should be sent directly to aesabsence@hcpss.org. ([Click for the full attendance announcement](#))

In your absence email, please include the following:

- Student's full legal name
- Homeroom teacher
- Dates of absence
- Reason for absence (e.g., illness, bereavement, observance of a religious holiday, lack of transportation)

Birthday Celebrations

We know and appreciate that families want to recognize their children's birthdays and participate in other class celebrations. However, it is important to remember that [HCPSS Policy 9090: Wellness Through Nutrition and Physical Activity](#) does not allow for parents (or staff) to bring in food for these kinds of occasions. You may bring in something special for your own child, but any food items cannot be shared with other students. If you'd like to provide a goodie bag to the class, consider including items like pencils, fidgets, or other small, non-food items

When there are class celebrations throughout the year, the community will be notified of any food items that will be provided for students. These food items will be in alignment with HCPSS Policy 9090 and meet the required nutritional guidelines. If you would prefer that your child not have what is being offered, you may choose to send in an alternate item.

Also, please note that HCPSS provides a circular to all schools each year prohibiting the presence of latex balloons in school buildings. Any balloons used for decoration or celebration in the building must be latex-free.