



From the Administration

Dear Tiger Families,

Importance of Attendance

Research is clear that showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic and social success, starting from kindergarten and continuing through high school. Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school, or even facing social challenges.

- **Missing 10% (or about 18 days of a school year) can drastically affect a student's academic success.**
- **By the 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that can indicate if a student is at risk for dropping out of high school.**
- **In the 9th grade, regular and high attendance predict graduation rates better than 8th-grade test scores.**

Student attendance is a major point of focus for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Starting in the 2023-2024 school year, MSDE lowered the chronic absenteeism rate from 20% to 10%, meaning that at 10%, a student should receive support and interventions to improve their absenteeism.

Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) believes that attendance is key to student success. Maryland's attendance rate represents the average daily attendance rate of students in grades 1-12, including those with special education needs. The state's proficient standard for attendance rate is 94%, and the advanced standard is 96%.

In support of achieving Exemplary Attendance for all students, we are sharing with you a comprehensive approach to attendance supports and interventions.

- If a student has missed 5% of their monthly attendance days (as few as 1-2 days a month), parents/guardians will receive a Care and Concern Phone Call and letter from their school. This step will allow staff members to coordinate with families to determine how the student can be supported for better attendance.
- If a student has missed 10% of their monthly attendance days (defined as chronic absenteeism by MSDE), parents/guardians will receive a 10% Chronic Absenteeism Attendance Letter. Parents/guardians and students may be scheduled for an attendance

conference. Other interventions and supports may also be used in an effort to assist the student.

- If a student has missed 15% of their monthly attendance days, in addition to the interventions and supports at 5% and 10%, these students may require an attendance support plan. Students may also be referred to the Central Attendance Team.
- If a student has missed 20% of their monthly attendance days, parents/guardians will receive a 20% Emergency Chronic Absenteeism Letter or Habitual Truancy Letter. Students may be referred to Project Attend and/or the State's Attorney's Office for habitual truancy.

With the collaborative effort of HCPSS parents/guardians, staff, and students, we are confident that all students can have successful attendance. This will improve student success in school and in their future lives.

Always for children,

Dr. Debra L. O'Byrne, Principal, and Mrs. Sara Cox, Assistant Principal

From the School

Dates to Remember

- 9/23 - Schools and Offices Closed
- 9/27 - HCPSS Family Kickoff (**Rescheduled**)
- 10/1 - [National Principals' Month](#)
- 10/2 - Schools and Offices Closed
- 10/13-17 - [National School Lunch Week](#)
- 10/17 - Schools Closed for Students: Professional Work Day
- 10/20 - Schools and Offices Closed
- 10/20-24 - [National School Bus Safety Week](#)
- 10/27 - World Occupational Therapy Day
- 10/28 - K-5: Fall Picture Day
- 10/31 - Schools Close 3 Hours Early: Professional Work Day

Resources

[HCPSS 2025-2026 School Calendar](#)

[RA Color Day Schedule](#)

[WFES Fridge Sheet 25-26](#)

Nothing But Bundt Reading [tracker](#)

Amazon Gift List for Tiger Cart

Our WFES Tigers earn Tiger Tickets for being Respectful, Responsible, and Ready to Learn. Students can use their Tiger Tickets to purchase fun prizes on our Tiger Cart and social experiences. If you would like to support our students, please consider donating from our [Tiger Cart Wish List](#) and the items will be sent directly to school.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity!

Change of Address

Parents and Guardians: This is a reminder that any change of residency must be reported through Family File within 10 school days of the move. Current residency documentation must be provided to the school each time residency changes. Thank you for your cooperation.

Nothing Bundt Cakes Youth Reading Program

Once again, WFES will participate in the Books and Bundts Youth Reading Program. The program runs from September 2025 through May 2026. Please see the flyer below and use the [tracker](#) that you can download each month. Happy Reading!



Who
Pre-K through Elementary School Students

What
Students will receive a Free Bundtlet for each month that they read 400+ minutes.

When*
September, 2025 to June, 2026

Why
Reading at an early age enriches children's brains, increases vocabulary and test scores, introduces readers to the world around them and helps develop their imaginations.



Does your child want a
Free Bundtlet every month?*

Have him or her
read for at least
**20 minutes a day,
5 days a week!**



JOIN OUR "BOOKS & BUNDTS" YOUTH READING PROGRAM

It's easy, free and delicious!

Turning your child into an enthusiastic reader is as easy as 1-2-3!

- 1 Record child's time spent reading on the monthly tracker.
- 2 Bring the completed reading tracker to the bakery listed.
- 3 Celebrate your child's accomplishment with a **Free Bundtlet** and an award certificate he or she can hold on to long after the cake has been enjoyed!

Columbia, MD
10730 Little Patuxent Pkwy, Suite 102
Columbia, MD 21044
(410) 587-0670
bryan.pax@nothingbundtcakes.com

Nothing But Bundt Reading [tracker](#)

[Girls on the Run Central Maryland](#)

Coaches Needed! Do you have a passion for volunteerism, healthy habits, goal setting, and female empowerment? Our coaches unlock confidence through thought-provoking conversations, an intentional curriculum, and movement-based games. Girls on the Run® inspires girls to be joyful, healthy, and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum that creatively integrates running. Teams of 8-20 meet twice weekly after school from the week of September 22 through the week of December 8, 2025. West Friendship ES will meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays after school from 3:50 to 5:15 pm. Each season concludes with a 5K culminating event! Coaches can be men or women over 18 and do NOT need to be runners

or have previous coaching experience. Free training is provided. Visit www.gotrcentralmd.org for more information. You can email Susan Gartner (susan.michel@girlsontherun.org) if you're interested or have questions. Potential coaches should also complete the Girls on the Run online coach application at <https://www.pinwheel.us/volunteer/signup/New-Coach-App-Fall2025>.



JOIN GIRLS ON THE RUN!

FALL 2025

CONFIDENCE that lasts a lifetime!

Girls on the Run is a girl-empowerment organization that inspires participants to be joyful, healthy, and confident using evidence-based lessons that combine relationship building, community strengthening, and goal setting with physical movement.

WHY GOTR MATTERS



Girls' self-confidence begins to drop by age 9



Girls' physical activity levels decline starting at age 10



50% of girls ages 10 to 13 experience bullying

REGISTRATION DETAILS

Registration opens Sunday, August 24 at noon!

Sign up before September 22, 2025
Registration Fee: \$210

SCAN ME!



For more information and to register, visit
www.gotrcentralmd.org

SEASON DETAILS

Season Starts:
Week of September 22, 2025

Season Ends:
Week of December 8, 2025

QUESTIONS?

Contact

Girls on the Run Central Maryland

 susan.gartner@girlsontherun.org

 443.583.7740

From the PTA

PTA August-September Newsletter

Here is the [link](#) for the WFES PTA Newsletter. This newsletter and all other PTA information can also be viewed on our Website under [PTA Corner](#).

Winter Coat Drive

Make a difference by participating in the Winter Coat Drive event. Please refer to the details outlined in the flyer shown below.



The flyer has a light blue background with white snowflake patterns. At the top, the words "WINTER" and "COAT DRIVE" are prominently displayed. "WINTER" is in a white, outlined, sans-serif font, while "COAT DRIVE" is in a bold, white, sans-serif font inside a dark blue rounded rectangle. Below this, the text "Which school will collect the most coats?" is written in a bold, italicized, black font. A paragraph follows, encouraging participation and donations of coats, gloves, hats, mittens, and scarves. The flyer is divided into three columns by thin vertical lines. Each column features a circular photograph at the top: the first shows children in winter gear, the second shows two women smiling, and the third shows a woman and a child. Below each photo is a section of text detailing the event's logistics. At the bottom, the sponsors are listed in a small, black, sans-serif font. On the far left, vertical text provides contact information for more details.

**WINTER
COAT DRIVE**

Which school will collect the most coats?

Make a difference by participating in our Winter Coat Drive event. Donate your new or clean gently used coats, gloves, hats, mittens, and scarves in all sizes from infants to adult! Come out and volunteer too!

**Dropoff Winter Coats & Hats
Collection Dates & Times**
August 26- October 7, 2026
Monday-Friday
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Howard County Multiservice Center
9900 Washington Boulevard, Ste. I
Laurel, MD 20723

Volunteer Opportunities
Help us prepare for the
Coat Giveaway
Friday, Oct. 17, 2025
4:30 AM - 7:30 PM
Hang and Set Up Coats
North Laurel
Community Center
9411 Whiskey Bottom Road
Laurel, MD 20723
&
Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025
North Laurel
Community Center
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Assist families & carry coats to cars

Coat Distribution Day
Saturday, October 18,
2025
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
North Laurel
Community Center
9411 Whiskey Bottom
Road
Laurel, MD 20723

For more information email or
text tracey_williams@hcpss.org or
(443)253-4398

SPONSORED BY
HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES
&
PTA COUNCIL OF HOWARD COUNTY
TO BENEFIT THE HOWARD COUNTY NORTH LAUREL MULTISERVICE

HCPSS Community News/Resources:

Registration for BSAP Saturday Math Academy

The BSAP Saturday Math Academy fall session is approaching! The program offers an in-person enrichment for Howard County Public School System students in all levels of math for grades 3-12, based on course availability. **Registration will take place online on Saturday, September 20, 2025**, from 9:00 am until capacity is reached. Class space is limited. Families can register by accessing the [HCPSS Connect Website](https://news.hcpss.org/news-posts/2025/09/black-student-achievement-program-bsap-saturday-math-academy-fall-2025-program/) on the registration date. For more information, please visit:

<https://news.hcpss.org/news-posts/2025/09/black-student-achievement-program-bsap-saturday-math-academy-fall-2025-program/>

Flyers for distribution:

- [BSAP SMA Fall 2025 Flyer \(English\)](#)
- [BSAP SMA Fall 2025 Flyer \(Spanish\)](#)
- [BSAP SMA Fall 2025 Flyer \(Chinese\)](#)
- [BSAP SMA Fall 2025 Flyer \(Korean\)](#)

HCPSS Family Academy Kickoff

Date: Saturday, Sept. 27, 9:00 am–12:00 pm

Location: Oakland Mills High School

This districtwide event is open to all HCPSS families and will feature:

- A session with Superintendent Bill Barnes
- Resource tables hosted by HCPSS offices and local organizations
- Information on programs, resources, and services available throughout the school year
- Childcare and language access provided

For additional information, please visit the [Family Academy Kickoff HCPSS News Post](#)

Please see the fliers below for more information:

- [English](#)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Chinese](#)
- [Korean](#)

The Salvation Army Christmas AngelTree Program

The Salvation Army is hosting its 2025 Christmas AngelTree Program for Howard County. Please see the [Salvation Army Angel Tree](#) link for all the details.

A Message From Your Local West Friendship Volunteer Fire Department

[2025 Open House - West Friendship Volunteer Fire Department Community News and Programs](#)

October is Fire Prevention Month – COME VISIT US!

SUNDAY, October 19th 12 pm – 4 pm



MHCAC Back-to-School Newsletter

The Mental Health Advisory Council (MHCAC) is a group of community members who seek to remove barriers and build awareness for behavioral health support in Howard County for our children and families. HCPSS is an active member of MHCAC. Please check out the [MHCAC Fall Newsletter 2025](#) for more information.

Message from Howard County Recreation and Parks

Attached is the **Howard County Recreation & Parks - [Fall 2025 Before & After School Classes](#)** flier for West Friendship ES, which markets our Fall 2025 Before & After school classes for students at West Friendship ES.

These classes offer fun, structured, educational, and enriching activities for students on-site at WFES, benefiting both students and parents. Please [register here](#).

