

**April 4, 2025**

### **A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK**

It's hard to believe we are at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter. It seems like the school year is flying by and taking forever to get to Spring Break at the same time! Starting on Monday, we will begin the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter. This is a fresh start for all of our students. Help them keep up with their assignments by sitting down with them at least once a week and review Canvas assignments and grades with them. This will help them stay on top of completing assignments and give you and your children a chance to address any grade concerns with teachers as soon as possible.

Monday also starts the school-wide testing season. Students in all grades will be taking the MCAP English Language Arts/Literacy test Monday-Thursday next week. These are required tests, so it is very important for students to be on time for school, get a good night's sleep, eat a healthy breakfast (which they can also get at school), and bring their CHARGED school-issued Chromebook and charger each day. If students miss a session, they will have to make it up in the coming weeks. MCAP Math testing will happen towards the end of May, and 8th graders will also be taking the Social Studies MCAP test in the beginning of May. These tests not only provide data for how your child is performing and understanding the curriculum, but the score is also used to determine HCMS's year star ranking. It is important to make sure that you encourage your child to take their time and do their best on each section of the test.

Finally, as we are moving into the warmer part of the school year, take this time to talk to your child about good hygiene practices, and wearing clothes that keep them comfortable in the building while following the [HCPSS Dress Code](#). The dress code is non-gendered and requires certain body parts to be covered. Clothes must be worn in a way such as the chest, midriff, pelvic/groin area, and buttocks are covered with opaque (non-see-through) material. Also, while we address HVAC concerns as quickly as possible, the reality is that we have a 51-year-old building and HVAC system. Layers are a best bet for helping your child stay comfortable while in the building. As always, we appreciate your partnership as we work with each of your children to help them have a successful end to the school year.

Dr. Alexia K.S. Couch

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES**

#### **ELA MCAP TESTING STARTS MONDAY**

ELA MCAP will take place on 4/7, 4/8, 4/9 and 4/10. Each session will be 70 minutes in length. Please remind your students to get a good night's sleep before testing and to charge their devices fully the night before.

#### **JOE CORBI'S FUNDRAISER PICK UP**



**Date: Thursday, April 10**



**Time: 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**



**Location: HCMS Cafeteria**

- ♦ **Important:** All items **must** be picked up during this time.
- ❄️ We **do not** have storage space for items that require freezing.

Thank you for your support! 🎉

### **THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS COMMUNITY ACADEMY**

**TCOE Community Academy: Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships:** The Council of Elders of the Black Community of Howard County is hosting the fourth installment of the TCOE Community Academy: Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships. This session will be held in-person on Saturday, April 5, 2025 from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. at Oakland Mills Middle School (9540 Kilimanjaro Road, Columbia, MD 21045). In this interactive session, participants will explore the dynamics of healthy vs. unhealthy relationships, and how to start conversations with children. Families can register for the session [here](#). For additional information, please view the flyer [here](#).

### **HCMS PE DEPARTMENT FUNDRAISER FOR THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION**

We are participating in the American Heart Challenge with the American Heart Association to raise awareness regarding heart health! By participating in the American Heart Challenge, you have the opportunity to raise awareness and funds for congenital heart defects, nutrition security, CPR training, mental well-being and more as we work to end heart disease and stroke. Sign up for the American Heart Challenge using the link below:

[American Heart Challenge at Harper's Choice](#)

Thank you!!

### **DONATION REQUEST FOR TISSUES**

As the springtime allergies are among us, we would appreciate and accept any donations of tissues! We thank you for your support in advance.

### **HCMS PTA NEWS-PLEASE SUPPORT**

In support of Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5-9) and the Positive Behavior Support Initiative (PBIS) store, the Administration, in collaboration with the PTA, is seeking gift card donations. Listed below are two separate events in need of gift cards.

Gift card requests for Teacher Appreciation Week (TAW) will be used towards prizes that will be awarded throughout the week to the teachers & staff.

Gift card requests for PBIS will be part of the "PBIS Store" where students will have an opportunity to "buy" gift cards with their collection of kudos. The "PBIS Store" is planning to open end of May.

We graciously request that all gift card donations be made by **Friday, April 25** to the front office. Please make sure to indicate if gift cards are for TAW or PBIS. Thank you in advance for your support! Your generosity and consideration is greatly appreciated!

**Please see sign up below:**

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4AA9AF22A2FE3-55968639-donation>

Thank you.

## CONGRATULATIONS ~ 6th GRADE MESA TEAM

Mrs. Brown would like to congratulate the 6th Grade MESA team: Shanja Mohammed, Sampson Kyere, James Warner, and Ion Crocker. This team will represent HCMS at the John Hopkins Applied Science MESA County Regional Competition on Saturday April 5. They will be competing in the "Community Clean Up Challenge". Even with the very late start and snow days, this ambitious team showed an enormous amount of perseverance and ingenuity to complete the MESA Challenge. Impressive! If you see these 6th graders, congratulate them.

## Financial Literacy Fair – April 19

Join us for the Financial Literacy Fair on April 19 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the Howard County Glenwood Library! This exciting event is designed for middle and high school students to build essential money management skills in a fun and engaging way.

- ✓ Guest Speaker: Professor Linda Bartlett, a financial expert with 30+ years of experience
- ✓ Interactive Activities to make learning fun
- ✓ Free Resources to boost your financial knowledge
- ✓ Snack and Beverages provided!

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to gain real-world financial skills and set yourself up for success! 🎉

RSVP today and save your spot before it's taken!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScjfVHNtknVCsPP9Sv-2PNSxhL4m3EafFv0m7Mz5G6PE15oEw/viewform?usp=sharing>. Any questions, contact Sunay Raval, Founder & President of Howard High School's Financial Literacy Club, at [sunay\\_raval@hotmail.com](mailto:sunay_raval@hotmail.com).

## UPCOMING DATES

04/04/2025 End of 3rd Quarter  
04/07 - 04/10/2025 ELA MCAP testing  
04/09/2025 Empowerment Night 5:30 p.m.  
04/14/2025 - 04/21/2025 Schools closed for Spring Break  
04/25/2025 Report cards available at 4:00 p.m.

## CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

### PEP - PARENT ENCOURAGEMENT PROGRAM

PEP (Parent Encouragement Program) Family Resiliency Classes are being offered FREE of charge

- Classes will meet 1 night a week for 8 weeks starting the week of April 22, 2025
- For parents/caregivers of children ages 5-18 yrs.
- Classes will meet online via Zoom, with a video presentation followed by a group discussion led by a PEP facilitator.

- Each participant who attends at least 5 sessions and the evaluation session (week 8) will receive a \$50 gift card (limit one per family/household).
- Classes are offered in English, Spanish, and Amharic.
- Classes are limited to 25 participants each.

Please visit <https://pep-frp.org/> for more information and to register.  
Contact is [FRP@PEPparent.org](mailto:FRP@PEPparent.org) or (301) 929-8824.

### **HCPSS 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR UPDATES**

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) 2024-2025 school year calendar included five inclement weather days, June 12–13 and June 16–18. As of Feb. 28, HCPSS has used six days. In order to meet the State-mandated 180 days for students, HCPSS must add a day to the school year calendar.

At the February 27 meeting, the Board of Education approved making Monday, March 31, a full day for students, shifting the scheduled Professional Work and Development Day for school staff to Monday, April 14, which is the first day of spring break. HCPSS did request a waiver for the sixth inclement weather day from the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), but it was not approved.

The Board also approved moving the end of the third marking period from March 28 to April 4, which accounts for inclement weather days and better balances the number of days in each marking period.

Barring any additional inclement weather days, the last day of school will be Wednesday, June 18, 2025. Updates to the June calendar include the following:

- Friday, June 6: Schools dismiss three hours early; No half-day pre-K/RECC
- Monday, June 9-Friday June 13: Full school day
- Monday, June 16-Tuesday, June 17: Schools dismiss three hours early
- Wednesday, June 18: Last day of school; schools dismiss three hours early

An updated [HCPSS calendar](#) can be found online.

[Español](#) | [中文](#) | [한국어](#)

### **HC DRUGFREE UPDATES**

**Drive-Thru Medication and Sharps Disposal** – Saturday, April 26 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, EpiPens and other sharps, vitamins, pet meds, vape devices, inhalers, and more! Need student, adult, and medically-trained adult volunteers. Giving away 100 medication lockboxes.

For more information: <https://hcdrugfree.org/drug-take-back-day-1/>

To sign up to volunteer: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/4-26-25TakeBack>

**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 May 19,**

**2025, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. on Zoom.** For more information, visit: <https://hcdrugfree.org/teen-advisory-council/>

### **INTERNET RESOURCE**

Project 10Million's [Direct to Parent/Guardian program](#) provides internet access to eligible families that have a student who meets the eligibility criteria. Approved families receive 200GB of mobile data per year for 5 years and a FREE mobile hotspot, plus the opportunity to purchase additional Wi-Fi devices at a low cost.

- New and existing T-Mobile (including Metro by T-Mobile and Assurance) as well as Non-T-Mobile customers are eligible to apply.
- Available to residents of the United States and Puerto Rico. Not currently available in the US Virgin Islands.
- One free T-Mobile hotspot device and 200GB/year data line per household, max one per student.
- Data service ends when allotment is reached until the yearly renewal date (additional data passes are available for purchase).
- May purchase up to five select, at-cost Wi-Fi-only tablets and laptops for use with the hotspot device.

Website linked here:

[https://www.t-mobile.com/support/account/project-10million-direct-to-parent-guardian-eligibility?icid=MGPO\\_TMO\\_U\\_20TENMM\\_6BRGAVTKUD4AUN8W23252](https://www.t-mobile.com/support/account/project-10million-direct-to-parent-guardian-eligibility?icid=MGPO_TMO_U_20TENMM_6BRGAVTKUD4AUN8W23252)

### **UPDATE FAMILY FILE TODAY!**

**As field trips are quickly approaching, please make sure that you have submitted your Family File.** We are currently at 93% completion. All families must update their emergency contact information annually. While we recognize that many of you may not have any changes, you must transition through each screen and click submit at the end for this task to be completed. **The completion of the Family File is essential to your students' participation in field trips, dances, and other fun activities throughout the year.** Please visit [HCPSS Connect](#) today and click submit on the final screen! If you need assistance, please call the front office.

Family File Directions

[FAMILY FILE USER GUIDE \(ENGLISH\)](#)

[FAMILY FILE USER GUIDE \(SPANISH\)](#)

Thank you to all of the families who have completed their Family File!

### **HCPSS FREE STUDENT RTA BUS PASS PROGRAM**

Thanks to a continued partnership between HCPSS, Howard County Government, and Regional Transportation Agency (RTA), all HCPSS middle and high school students have access to free RTA bus passes through summer 2025. Students have full access to the RTA system and are not limited to transportation to and from schools or to school-related activities. If your child is interested, they can visit our front office to request a free pass.

### **HCPSS POLICY 9400 - STUDENT BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION**

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is committed to providing a safe, engaging, and supportive school environment that fosters the social and emotional safety, dignity, and well-being of all students. HCPSS acknowledges the need for employees

1. to use an array of research-based positive behavior interventions, strategies, and supports to address student behaviors and keep students safe.
2. to minimize the practice of exclusion from the classroom environment
3. to minimize the practice of physical restraint (which may only be used when necessary to protect a student or other person from imminent, serious, physical harm and only after other less intrusive, nonphysical interventions have failed or been determined inappropriate).

It is an expectation that HCPSS employees will be responsive to all incidents of exclusion or physical restraint and appropriately case manage impacted students to minimize unsafe behaviors and maximize instructional engagement.

Additional information can be found at [HCPSS Policy 9400 - Student Behavior Intervention](#). If you have any questions regarding this policy or its implementation, please contact a school administrator.

### **HCPSS POLICY 9460**

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all students. Preventing bullying is an important part of this goal. [HCPSS Policy 9460](#) states that bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation are prohibited in HCPSS. Our administration and staff have been trained and made aware of this policy as well as preventative and responsive measures.

We know how important your role is in not only supporting your children, but also reporting possible incidents as you become aware of them. The BCHI Reporting Form should be used to report all alleged incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation that occur at school or have a connection back to the school setting that create a risk of harm to other students while they are at school or interfere with the educational environment. An [online version](#) is available and can easily and confidentially be used by students, staff, and family members. Hard copies of this form are available in the main office, staff workroom, school counseling office, media center, and health services office. If you believe your child has been bullied, please complete and submit this form as soon as possible and/or assist your child in doing so.

Once the form is submitted, school administrators will ensure the parent/guardian of both the alleged target and alleged offender are aware of the report and will begin an investigation within two school days of receiving the report. Parents/guardians can expect a school administrator to reach out to them during the investigation. Once the investigation is completed, parents/guardians will be provided written notice of the outcome of the investigation within fifteen days of receiving the complaint, excluding extenuating circumstances.

### **CAR LOOP REMINDERS**

Please remember that anyone dropping off students in the morning should use our designated drop-off location which is located at the back of our bus line in the large parking lot. We are asking parents to refrain from dropping off students in the small parking lot as it causes congestion. Our concern is the safety of our students, parents and staff. Thank you for using our [designated student drop-off location](#).

### **WILDE LAKE HIGH SCHOOL SPECTATOR RULES/GUIDELINES**

Please view this [flyer](#) for more information.

## **ATTENDANCE REMINDERS**

Need to report an absence? Please email your absence notes/questions to:

[HCMSAbsence@hcpss.org](mailto:HCMSAbsence@hcpss.org) or send in a signed parent/guardian note. The email should include the student's name, the parent's name, the date(s) or period(s) (if absence is a partial day) of the absence, and the reason for the absence. The email must be received within 5 days of the absence. Requests for changes to attendance submitted after the 5 day deadline cannot be honored.

Please Note: Absences are unexcused until an email or note is received.

For Discretionary Absences (up to 3 per school year), please complete the linked form and email it to: [HCMSAbsence@hcpss.org](mailto:HCMSAbsence@hcpss.org). This form must be completed one week prior to absence.

For Religious Observances, please complete the linked form and email to:

[HCMSAbsence@hcpss.org](mailto:HCMSAbsence@hcpss.org).

## **HCMS FOOD PANTRY**

HCMS has partnered up with the [LindaBen Foundation](#) and Safeway to help feed our HCMS community. If your family is interested in receiving food boxes or you would like to make donations to our food pantry, please call the HCMS front office.

If you would like to make direct donations to the LindaBen Foundation, please view this [information](#).

## **COMMUNICATION TO FAMILIES**

Families may find it useful to bookmark the following webpages where information will be continually updated and posted:

[HCMS website](#)

[HCPSS website](#)

[HCPSS 2024-2025 Calendar](#)

[2024-2025 School Year](#)

[HCPSS News Site](#)

[HCPSS Help Site](#)

## **CLOTHING TO CASH**

HCMS participates in the Clothing to Cash fundraising program. Clothing to Cash is a textile recycling program that donates money to the school for every pound of donated items. Look for the white donation bin at the bottom of the Harper's Choice Middle School parking lot. Clothing to Cash will accept items in ALL conditions: new with tags, or torn, stained, worn-out knees, shoes with holes or only one shoe, backpacks, old sheets, towels, blankets, stuffed animals and more. What a great way to help the school and clean out your closets! All donations must be bagged and put in the collection bin. We appreciate your support!

Please remember to follow these [guidelines](#).

## **GROCERY STORE FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS**

HCMS partners with the following grocery stores as a fundraiser for our school. Please consider linking your card and help raise money for our school!

Harris Teeter Together in Education

Harris Teeter's [Together In Education](#) program gives schools a chance to earn funds when you link your VIC card and shop Harris Teeter brands. When you shop Harris Teeter brands, a percentage of

your purchase is donated to the school that your VIC card is linked to. There are NO LIMITS to how much a school can earn. Register your VIC card to our SCHOOL ID# 7984.

Weis Markets Weis4School

Through the [Weis4School program](#), you can earn cash for HCMS each time you shop at Weis. To register, simply scan the HCMS Barcode at checkout. Each time you shop at Weis, be sure to scan your Weis card to earn money for our school.

#### **COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Please visit the [Community News and Programs](#) page on the HCPSS website for announcements of upcoming events and programs sponsored by non-profit organizations.