

September 29, 2023

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Thank you for your support of our arrival and dismissal procedures! If you are driving or your child is walking to school, please ensure your child arrives by 8:25 a.m. so they are in class before the 8:30 bell. This ensures they are ready for instruction when it begins. We also thank you for your support in having your children finish their outside breakfast prior to coming into the school at the beginning of the day. As a reminder, all of our students are able to receive a free breakfast in the morning, prior to 1st period starting.

A big thank you to Ms. Ressler, one of our School Counselors, who organized the Attendance Awareness Spirit Week to highlight the importance of attendance in our school. We will celebrate our students who were not tardy this week during lunch next Friday. Also, please see the following link for tips on supporting students with attendance. Visit www.attendanceworks.org for more information! We will be having another Spirit Week soon to highlight Anti-Bullying Month. Look for information coming soon.

We hope you have a good weekend, and remember to take time to check Canvas with your child to ensure they are staying caught up with their assignments.

Dr. Alexia K.S. Couch

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

ELA MAP TESTING IS NEXT WEEK

We want to inform you about the upcoming ELA MAP Testing sessions that are scheduled to begin next week at HCMS. Below are the details you need:

1. Students will test in their English classes. All classes will take the assessment EXCEPT 8th grade GT ELA classes.
2. They will be testing on Monday 10/2 and on Tuesday 10/3.
3. Please ensure that students get a good night's sleep and bring a **fully charged computer to school with them.**

Purpose of MAP Testing:

1. Measure student growth over time
2. Gain preliminary benchmark of College and Career Readiness (CCR)
3. Assess instructional strengths and needs
4. Support differentiated instruction in the classroom
5. Project performance on MCAP Assessments.

We thank you for your continued support on testing days. We believe that with your continued support, our students will perform at the best during these rounds of assessments. Together we can help them reach their highest potential!

HCDRUGFREE UPCOMING EVENTS

Free Parenting Classes - As educators, we are well aware of the ever-increasing pressures placed on students. The academic demands, social challenges, and rapidly changing world can be overwhelming. Our [GGCFall2023.pdf](#) parenting classes can equip parents and/or grandparents with the knowledge and skills to reduce the risk that their children will use drugs and alcohol or engage in other dangerous behaviors. These classes are for families with children 9 - 14 yrs. old and held over Zoom.

Medication and Sharps Disposal Take Back Day - October 28 in the Wilde Lake Village Center Parking Lot from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Safely dispose of prescription medication, over-the-counter meds, sharps, vitamins, pet meds, vape devices, inhalers, and more! Also, 100 medication lockboxes purchased by HCPSS will be given away for FREE! See [MedsSharps10-28-23 \(D\).pdf](#) for more information.

HIGH SCHOOL ACCREDITED COURSES

If your child is enrolled in a high school level course, please see the attached [HS Credit Course Letter to Parent.docx](#) for important information.

EMERGENCY CARD PROCEDURES - FAMILY FILE

HCPSS utilizes Family File for parents/guardians to supply emergency information. Parents/guardians must verify and/or update information for each child every year. [Details on Family File are available online.](#) We are currently at 55% completion. If you haven't had time to complete, please take the time this weekend. If you need

assistance, please call the front office.

HCPSS BLACK STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

The HCPSS Black Student Achievement Program invites you to attend the upcoming [BSAP College and Career Opportunities Night](#) on Thursday, October 12, 2023 at Long Reach High School. This College and Career Opportunities Night invites scholars in grades 8 - 12 countywide to network with working professionals, colleges/universities, explore post-secondary opportunities and learn more about HCPSS pathways. The evening will highlight a variety of colleges and universities as well as local businesses and organizations. To register, please complete the Registration Form linked [here](#). For more information, please contact Ashley Armstead (Ashley_Armstead@hcpss.org).

HCPSS HIGH SCHOOL EVENTS

Per HCPSS expectations, anyone under high school age must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to attend a ticketed event at any HCPSS high school. Wilde Lake HS will be checking student IDs at the gate. We invite students and families from our Wilde Lake community schools to join us, and middle school students must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to attend.

UPCOMING DATES

10/02/2023-10/3/2023 ELA MAP Testing
10/09/2023 Schools closed for students, Professional Learning Day
10/20/2023 Schools closed for students, Professional Work Day
10/31/2023 Schools close 3 hours early, end of first quarter

CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

SCHOOL MEALS

HCPSS no longer will use Nutrislice for school menus or MySchoolBucks* for meal payments and instead is offering a new parent site for all things food and nutrition. [LINQ Connect](#) is a secure, online portal that allows families to:

View breakfast and lunch menus
Make online payments to their child's meal account
Monitor their child's accounts
Schedule recurring payments and/or low balance alerts
Submit an online application for the Free and Reduced Meals program

Please review [HCPSS meal information](#) and find information on FARMs (Free and Reduced Meals). [Applications](#) must be completed every year. Students whose families do not qualify for the free or reduced lunch program will be required to pay the daily meal price for lunch - \$3.30. Students are welcome to bring their own lunch, however we do not accept food deliveries from other vendors (DoorDash, Grubhub, Uber Eats, etc.).

Breakfast will be provided to all students at no cost. Breakfast will be served from 8:20 - 8:35 a.m. All outside breakfast items (including drinks) are prohibited from being consumed in school during this time.

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 2024. 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.

ATTENDANCE REMINDERS

Need to report an absence? Please email your absence notes/questions to: 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. This form must be completed one week prior to absence.

For Religious Observances, please complete the linked form and email to: 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 2023-2024 Calendar](#)

[2023-2024 School Year](#)

[HCPSS News Site](#)

[HCPSS Help Site](#)

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.

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.

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.