

September 22, 2023

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

It's hard to believe we are almost at the middle of Quarter 1! This means that we are fully into the school year. Please make sure that you are checking your child's grades on Canvas to make sure they are staying caught up with their classes and turning in assignments. Canvas is also a great way to stay connected to your child's teachers. If you want to know more about Canvas, we will have a "Crash Course" on getting the most out of Canvas soon. Look for future emails for details of this event.

HCMS wants to congratulate Mr. DeAndre Ingram for being awarded a BrightMinds grant for teaching about healthy cooking. He was honored at the Board of Education meeting last night, but we wanted to make sure to give him a SHOUTOUT here as well.

We also wanted to thank our families and students for a smooth transition to our new start times. The doors open for students to come in 8:17 a.m. This allows the students plenty of time to get breakfast, go to their lockers, and be in class by the time the bell rings at 8:30 a.m. If your child is a car rider or walker please, try to have them arrive no later than 8:25 a.m. to ensure they are ready when class starts.

We currently have a 52% completion rate for Family File. Students will not be able to participate in field trips or after school activities without having an updated Family File. Please see directions below to complete this weekend.

Thank you for working with us to ensure that your child has a successful year at HCMS.

Dr. Alexia K.S. Couch

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

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.

SALVATION ARMY CHRISTMAS TREE PROGRAM

See this [Angel Tree Flyer 2023.pdf](#) form more information regarding registration.

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.

CHANGES TO SCHOOL START/DISMISSAL TIMES

School start and dismissal times change went into effect on Wednesday, September 20. HCMS new school time is 8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m. Details on the new arrival and departure times are available [online](#).

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 52% completion. If you haven't had time to complete, please take the time this weekend. If you need assistance, please call the front office.

SCHOOL DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES - (please read)

It is very important to us that we make sure everyone is safe getting to and from school. We are asking everyone to be patient and respectful of each other when dropping off and picking up your student. We will have staff outside to help support the process. We are asking you to remain in a single file line, do not park in the staff lot next to HCMS. This will help keep our students safe and the traffic flowing. Please see the [map](#) for dropping off. You will follow the red arrows in to drop off and exit following the white arrows. Please have your children exit as quickly and safely as they can in the mornings and in the afternoons to wait on the side of the building next to the line pick up so we can expedite the process. Thank you for your support as we

help our new families learn this process.

UPCOMING DATES

09/25/2023 Schools and offices closed for holiday

10/09/2023 Schools closed for students, Professional Learning Day

10/12/2023 PTA meeting, 7 p.m.

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 is using 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 BLACK STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

The HCPSS Black Student Achievement Program Saturday Math Academy Fall Session is approaching! This year, the BSAP Saturday Math Academy will offer an in-person enrichment program for Howard County Public School System students in all levels of math for grades 3-12 based on course availability. Registration opened September 16, 2023 and will be open until capacity is reached. Class space is

limited. Families can register by accessing the [HCPSS Connect Website](https://news.hcpss.org/news-posts/2021/09/bsap-saturday-math-academy-virtual-fall-2021-program/). For more information, please visit: <https://news.hcpss.org/news-posts/2021/09/bsap-saturday-math-academy-virtual-fall-2021-program/>

Flyers for distribution:

[BSAP SMA Fall 2023 Flyer \(English\)](#)

[BSAP SMA Fall 2023 Flyer \(Spanish\)](#)

[BSAP SMA Fall 2023 Flyer \(Chinese\)](#)

[BSAP SMA Fall 2023 Flyer \(Korean\)](#)

Please contact BSAP Supervisor, [Nicole Brown](#) if you have any questions.

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 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 , you can earn cash for HCMS each time you shop at Weis. To register,

simple scan the 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.