

February 2, 2024

IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES

2024-2025 MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE REGISTRATION IS OPEN

Current 5 - 7th grade students can view their teachers' course recommendations and submit course placement requests for the 2024-2025 school year from February 1 - 14. Complete details are [posted online](#).

QUARTER 2 REPORT CARDS

Quarter 2 report cards will be available in HCPSS Connect Synergy after 4 p.m. on Monday, February 5. [Instructions on how to access report cards](#) are available online.

WINTER COAT GIVEAWAY - FEBRUARY 5, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

[English version](#)

[Spanish version](#)

BLACK HISTORY MONTH KICK OFF!

You're invited to join us for an exciting kickoff to Black History Month 2024! Come cheer on several Harper's Choice Middle School families as they go head-to-head in a classic Family Feud-style trivia competition. The event will take place on **Tuesday, February 6, 2024, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the cafeteria**. Witness the fun, laughter, and friendly competition as families showcase their knowledge. Trivia and potential prizes await not only the competing families but also those in attendance. Intermissions will feature opportunities for additional prizes, adding to the excitement. Don't miss out on this fantastic event that celebrates Black History Month. We hope to see you there for an evening of community, laughter, and shared knowledge. For any questions, feel free to contact Black Student Achievement Program (BSAP) Liaison, Mr. Walker at kyron_walker@hcpss.org. See you there! See this [flyer](#) for more information.

3rd Quarter SMIL Listen and Learn Session

NEW DATE 2/6-Student Budget Town Hall

All middle and high school students are welcome to attend a Budget Town Hall on Tuesday, 2/6 at 7:00 p.m. Attend in person at Oakland Mills High School or online through your student HCPSS account and Google Meet Code: hcasc-budget

We are all impacted by the budget - join us to find out how you can share your insights and feedback with our Student Member of the Board of Education, learn how to participate in Public Hearings, and send emails to community leaders.

- [3rd Quarter SMIL Listen and Learn Budget Town Hall for Students Promotional Materials Folder for Schools](#)

BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION/RESOURCE FAIR COMING SOON

On Thursday, February 15 from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m, we will be hosting our Black History Month Celebration/Resource Fair. During this time, we will enjoy a soul food dinner, student performances, family fun activities, community resources and workshops for parents/guardians/community members. There will be multiple drawings that will take place throughout the night including a free flat screen TV! We look forward to seeing you at "A Taste of Soul: Celebrating the Strength Within Our Community". See this [flyer](#) for more information. Please make sure to [RSVP](#) here.

BLACK HISTORY EXPO - FEBRUARY 17, 2024

Please see the attached [flyer](#) for more information.

INTRAMURALS

We are excited to announce that our Winter/Spring Intramurals are starting up at HCMS. Please see below for permission slips:

[Art Club](#)

[Boys Basketball](#)

[Cheerleading](#)

HC DRUGFREE OPPORTUNITIES

HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council

Free Life Skills Classes for HoCo Kids (grades 6-9)

February 6, 13, 20, 27, and March 5, 2024 • 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

HC DrugFree is providing another series of *FUN* and interactive skills-based classes designed to **promote positive health and personal development**. This curriculum was designed for students in **grades 6 to 9**, but for slightly younger or older students, we will consider each request. Taught by college students with assistance of high schoolers who act as mentors and role models, this innovative series uses developmentally appropriate, collaborative learning strategies so students will learn skills that have been shown to help **resist high-risk behaviors**. The curriculum is designed to strengthen student's social skills, personal self-management skills, substance resistance skills, and more! Learn more and register: <https://tinyurl.com/LifeSkillsSpring24>

Know What's Happening in Howard County

Sign up for HC DrugFree's free newsletter at <https://hcdrugfree.org/enews-signup/> or

follow us on social media to get updates on events as well as information to keep your family safe and informed: [Facebook](#) [X](#) [LinkedIn](#)

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 65% completion. If you haven't had time to complete, please take the time this weekend. If you need assistance, please call the front office.

UPCOMING DATES

02/05/2024 Report Cards available at 4:00 p.m.
02/06/2024 Black History Month Kickoff - HCMS Family Feud, 5:30 p.m., cafe
02/07/2024 PTA meeting, 7:00 p.m.
02/09/2024 Schools closed for students, Professional Learning Day
02/15/2024 Black History Month Celebration/Resource Fair, 5:30 p.m.
02/19/2024 Schools and offices closed, Presidents Day

CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

HCPSS AND THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS (TCOE) COMMUNITY ACADEMIES

HCPSS and The Council of Elders of the Black Community of Howard County (TCOE) have partnered to sponsor the following parent workshops series:

- March 9: Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships

IMPORTANT BULLYING INFORMATION

As we approach the second half of the school year, we wanted to remind you that HCPSS is dedicated to providing a safe and supportive environment that focuses on student well-being. We are taking this time to uplift the importance of reporting any type of bullying that has occurred. We will be reviewing this with our students and staff as we start the second half of the school year, and hope that you too can uplift this at home.

For children facing the emotional toll of bullying, a supportive individual can make all the difference. Please encourage your children to reach out to a trusted staff member at school should they need to report anything. As parents and guardians, you will use the same reporting form as students by following the steps outlined below.

How do I report bullying?

1. When you believe bullying has taken place, you should report it through the Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment and Intimidation (BCHI) reporting form. Reporting can take place in one of three ways:

- Complete a [BCHI online reporting form](#)
- BCHI paper reporting form (available in the main office, staff workroom, school counseling office, media center, and health services office)
- An oral report to a staff member

2. It is important to note that policy states “in the event the reporting party does not complete a BCHI Reporting Form, school administrators/supervisors will take the appropriate steps to address and document the incident.” Therefore, if you or someone else makes an oral report, it then must be documented (i.e. through a BCHI reporting form) by the administrator.

Thank you for your partnership and attention to this important topic.

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.

FAN EXPECTATIONS AND SAFETY AT HCPSS ATHLETIC EVENTS

High school athletic events serve as a wonderful opportunity for students, friends, families, staff and community members to come together in support of their favorite teams. To ensure these games are able to be safely enjoyed by all in attendance, it is imperative that everyone adheres to the rules, expectations and laws in place to ensure safety.

All children who are in 8th grade or younger must be accompanied by an adult at all HCPSS athletics contests or will be turned away from entry. Adult supervision must continue for the entirety of the athletic contest.

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.

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.