

HCMS News

November 20, 2020

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS AND IMPORTANT REMINDERS

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Wishing you and your family a happy Thanksgiving holiday! As a reminder, we have early dismissal on Monday, November 23 and Tuesday, November 24 due to Parent Teacher Conferences. Additionally, there is no school for students on Wednesday, November 25. Please note: Middle school early dismissal days begin at 8:30 a.m., earlier than standard virtual instruction days. [Click here](#) to view the early dismissal schedule for middle school.

PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent Teacher conferences are scheduled for Monday, November 23 through Wednesday, November 25. The scheduling window via HCPSS Connect is now closed. Please contact your child's teacher if you need to schedule or cancel a conference.

Parents/guardians must use their student's login to join a conference:

1. Go to hcpss.me
2. Select the Google Meet button
3. Log in using student credentials
4. Enter meeting code*

*Meeting codes were included in confirmation emails for those parents/guardians who selected that option. Google Meet codes also can be found by viewing the Conference

Schedule located in [HCPSS Connect Synergy](#). Click the link for more information about [Fall 2020 Parent Teacher Conferences](#).

HCPSS TO REMAIN VIRTUAL THROUGH THIRD QUARTER

During its work session on Monday, November 16, 2020, the Howard County Board of Education voted to continue the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) in a virtual instructional model through the third academic quarter, which ends April 14, 2021. Additionally, the Board instructed the Superintendent and staff to explore possibilities for expanding and enhancing in-person small group program offerings, with consideration for staff preferences regarding participation. Small group in-person programs serve the needs of students who most benefit from face-to-face instruction and support. More information can be found on the [HCPSS website](#).

THANKSGIVING BREAK MEAL SERVICES: Adjustments for November 23–December 4, 2020

HCPSS will be closed for Parent Teacher Conferences and the Thanksgiving holiday from Wednesday, November 25 through Friday, November 27. To ensure children have access to essential nutrition over the holiday period, families may pick up meals in advance to cover the holiday break.

The following adjustments will be made to meal services:

- There is no meal service Wednesday, November 25-Friday, November 27.
- Meals for November 24-29 will be available for pickup on Tuesday, November 24.
- Pre-ordering will not be available for meals picked up Monday, November 23 or 30. Walk-up (non-pre-ordered) meals may be picked up those and other days schools are in session.
- Pre-ordering services will resume for meals to be picked up beginning Thursday, December 3. Pre-orders for that day must be submitted by Tuesday, December 1, 12:45 p.m.

Meals are provided at no cost to any HCPSS student or any child under age 18. More information about Fall 2020-2021 meal services is provided [online](#).

ATHOLTON HS JROTC PROGRAM INFORMATION

Interested in learning about the JROTC program at Atholton High School and how to join? Come to a virtual visit on Wednesday, December 2 from 11:00-11:45 a.m. Google Meet Code: AHS-JROTC

FAMILY SUPPORT AND RESOURCE CENTER

Do you have a child with an IFSP or IEP? The HCPSS Family Support and Resource Center (FSRC) offers a weekly email just for you! FSRC communications include helpful workshops, resources and community information specifically geared to supporting your journey. As a parent of a child with an IFSP/IEP, you should already be receiving the email, but if not, let us know so we can include your contact information in our database. You can also email specific questions to FSRC@hcpss.org.

UPCOMING DATES

11/23/20 - 11/24/20 Schools close 3 hours early, Parent/teacher conferences

11/25/20 Schools closed for students, Parent/teacher conferences

11/26/20 - 11/27/20 Schools and offices closed, Thanksgiving

CONTINUING ANNOUNCEMENTS

QUARTER 1 REPORT CARDS

Your child's Quarter 1 Report Card is now accessible via HCPSS Connect Synergy.

Parents/guardians may view/download report cards by taking the following steps:

1. Log in to [HCPSS Connect Synergy](#)
2. Select More Options from the left panel
3. Select Report Cards from the middle
4. Select the report card you wish to access

MEASURES OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS (MAP) REPORTS

Home reports for students who participated in the MAP assessment have been posted in Synergy. Parents/guardians may view/download MAP reports by taking the following steps:

1. Log in to [HCPSS Connect Synergy](#)
2. Select Academic Information from the left panel
3. Select Student's Report Cards from the middle
4. Near the top of the page, select MAP_2020_WINTER

Note: Students in Algebra I/II or Geometry, and English 8 G/T do not participate in MAP testing and will not have a report displayed. If your child did not participate in the October administration, a report may still appear based on the previous administration.

An overview of MAP testing and how to interpret the report can be found [online](#).

Additional information, such as how to access previous test scores, may be found at this [link](#).

HCMS ATTENDANCE POLICIES & PROCEDURES FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

Need to report an absence? Please email your absence notes/questions to: HCMSabsence@hcpss.org. **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.

For Discretionary Absences (up to 3 per school year), please complete the [linked form](#) and email it to: HCMSabsence@hcpss.org.

For Religious Observances, please complete the [linked form](#) and email to: HCMSabsence@hcpss.org.

PTA BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED

The HCMS PTA needs you! We are seeking volunteers to fill several vacant board member positions and to assist our PTA President Mrs. Headlam. Be involved with your child's school and let your voice be heard as we plan for an engaging school year. The PTA is a rewarding way to meet other parents/guardians in our school community and a way for you to make a difference in your child's middle school experience!

A FULL BOARD IS NEEDED to continue the amazing work of our PTA, which supports our students while building community and pride in our school. Unfortunately, without a full board, the PTA will not be able to continue all the programs we currently provide. Please consider joining the HCMS PTA Board!

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact our HCMS PTA President at ingrid.headlam@gmail.com or call the front office at 410-313-6929.

UPDATE ON SCHOOL MEALS

Free school meals previously due to expire at the end of December, have been extended through the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Thus, HCPSS will be able to provide meals at no cost to any HCPSS student, and all children 18 and under, through the entire school year, assuming continued availability of USDA funding.

UPDATE YOUR FAMILY FILE

Thank you to everyone who has already updated their Family File. We currently have 51% completion! HCPSS uses Family File for parents/guardians to provide emergency information. **Parents/guardians must verify and/or update information annually for each child** and can do so by logging in to [HCPSS Connect](#) and selecting the Family File tab and then clicking on Family File.

Once logged in, parents/guardians will be asked to provide or update the following information:

- Student information
- Parent/guardian contact
- Emergency contacts
- Medical information
- Arrival/dismissal procedures
- Media release (photo approval)
- Data confidentiality
- PTA/PTSA directory

Changes of address may not be made through Family File. If you have recently moved, please contact your child's school as soon as possible.

FUNDRAISING PROGRAMS

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.

Clothing to Cash

Please donate to our 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, stuffed animals, and more. What a great way to help our 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.

Harper's Choice Middle School | 5450 Beaverkill Road Columbia, MD 21044 | 410-313-6929 | hcms.hcpss.org