

Kaye M. Breon  
Principal



Brian Vanisko  
Assistant Principal

**West Friendship E.S.**  
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**Web Site:** <http://wfes.hcpss.org/>  
School Hours: 9:15 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

**December 17, 2021**

## Mark Your Calendars

- Monday, December 20** Spirit Day: Ugly Sweater Day – wear your ugliest sweater
- Tuesday, December 21** Spirit Day: Long Winter’s Nap Day – wear your cozy clothes
- Wednesday, December 22** Spirit Day: Pajama Day – wear your pj’s
- December 23-31** **Winter Break – Schools Closed**
- Monday, January 3** Schools Reopen
- Monday, January 17** **Schools & Offices Closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
- Wednesday, January 19** **Schools Close 3-Hours Early (12:45pm)**
- Friday, January 21** End of Second Quarter
- Monday, January 24** **Schools Closed for Students – Professional Work Day**

## From Our Administrators

Dear West Friendship Families,

As the year 2021 comes to a close, we would like to thank our wonderful parents for your partnership with us as we work together for each child’s success. We know this school year has been different than any other, but with team effort we are maintaining consistency for our students. The parents who make up our hard working PTA Executive Board, PTA committees, and our parent volunteers are to be commended for their dedication to our students, staff, and community.

We are thrilled to welcome our Day Building Supervisor, Mr. Stewart Custis back to school after his medical absence. He was very much missed by EVERYONE and it is good to see him back at WFES! Mr. Custis sends his thanks to everyone who inquired about his health, prayed for his recuperation, and sent him well wishes.

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to our WFES staff. We are thankful for our staff family and proud of all they have accomplished with students since the first day of school! We truly have the best staff and they work tirelessly for our students! We have endured staffing shortages, quarantine protocols, contact tracing, implementing new assessments, and learning new curriculum. Through it all our dynamic staff has continued to ensure that our students are learning, happy, and safe each day!

Our staff is very grateful for all the thoughtful gifts, delicious treats, generous “Gifts of Thanks”, and various acts of kindness during this holiday season. We thank each and every one of you for your caring, and sharing. Please use this winter break to enjoy time with your families, while maintaining safety protocols. On behalf of the WFES staff, we wish you and your families a joyful holiday season and Happy New Year!

Warmly,

Kaye M. Breon, Principal

Brian Vanisko, Assistant Principal

## School News

### VACCINATION CLINICS

For your convenience we are supplying information about [upcoming vaccination clinics](#) for HCPSS students ages 5-11. These clinics are made possible through HCPSS's partnership with the Howard County Health Department and several local pharmacies.

### Counselor's Corner

The HCPSS Elementary School Counseling Connection Newsletter is a great resource for students and parents to read together. Included in this December issue you will find information about different Holidays around the world, fun Winter Break Ideas, and learn how to improve your mood and relax with a Self-Hug. Have fun reading!

[December ES Newsletter: Issue 4](#)

### Federal Impact Aid Forms Due by December 31, 2021

Parents/guardians who work on a federal property in Maryland and/or are a member of a uniformed service qualify HCPSS to receive additional federal funding. The Federal Impact Aid programs provide financial assistance to school districts that enroll federally connected children. At HCPSS, Impact Aid supplements the operating budget to enhance the teaching and learning that takes place in Howard County classrooms.

In order to qualify for funding, parents who identified themselves in Family File as working on federal property in Maryland or as active duty military should log in via [HCPSS Connect Synergy](#) to complete the Impact Aid form by confirming the information and providing a digital signature before December 31, 2021.

**If you did not complete Family File this year** and work on federal property in Maryland or are active duty military, please [log in and complete the Federal Impact Aid section of Family File](#) prior to completing the Impact Aid form.

In instances where families are federally connected both by work location and membership in the uniformed services, the digital signature only needs to be completed by one parent.

To complete your online Impact Aid form:

1. [Log in to HCPSS Connect](#) using parent/guardian credentials
2. Select More Options from the left navigation
3. Select Federal Impact Aid from the middle

The family's federally connected information along with the digital signature will qualify the school system for applicable funding.

[Learn more about the Impact Aid program](#) and view answers to frequently asked questions online.

### Opting-In to Text Messages

#### Text Messaging

#### How can I opt-in to receiving text messages?

Text the word "YES" to 67587 from the wireless device you wish to receive texts on.

**I received a text message that says if from SchoolMessenger. What does it mean?**

*An opt-in invitation message was sent by HCPSS using SchoolMessenger from 67587 and said:*

*Howard County Public Schools alerts. Reply Y for approx. 5 msgs/mo. Txt HELP 4 info. Msg&data rates may apply. See [schoolmessenger.com/tm](http://schoolmessenger.com/tm)*

To continue receiving text messages, reply with Y. If you do not reply, you will not receive any future text alerts from School Messenger, the HCPSS News service provider. Text alerts include weather-related closings and emergency information.

## 2021-2022 Academic Calendar Updates

In order to provide school-based staff with additional time to address their increased workload and to support employee well-being, the Board of Education approved updates to the current [academic year calendar](#). Three-hour early dismissals now will take place on the following dates:

- January 19, 2022 (previously a 3-hour early dismissal for high school students only)
- February 16, 2022
- March 16, 2022
- April 27, 2022
- May 18, 2022

## Update Your Family File

Please make certain your Family File is up-to-date. We will be using these to dismiss your student(s) on unexpected closing days. Do not wait until that day to make changes. We may have already printed information prior to you making changes. In addition, HCPSS utilizes Family File for parents/guardians to supply emergency information. If you haven't done so already, [please verify and/or update information for your child\(ren\)](#) for the 2021-22 school year.

## Outdoor Recess

As we head into our winter months, now is the perfect time to share our school system's policy regarding outdoor recess. As you are aware, we take students outside each day for recess. This is a great opportunity for students to get some fresh air, exercise, and a much needed break from their academics. With that being said, we want to make sure that we keep students healthy so that they can be in school each day. If the wind chill (AKA "Feels Like") temperature is 20°F or above and no falling precipitation (no more than a sprinkle or mist) we will go outside for recess.

## From our Health Room - Daily COVID-19 Self-Screenings

All parents/guardians are to perform a [COVID-19 health check](#) every day before your student leaves home. Students are not to come to school if they are experiencing any [symptom\(s\) associated with COVID-19 or other communicable disease](#).

We thank you for keeping your children home when they are experiencing various illnesses. If you are unsure, please do not hesitate to contact the health room, by calling 410-313-5515 or email school nurse at [Elizabeth.Collora@hcpss.org](mailto:Elizabeth.Collora@hcpss.org). If you want to test your child, please don't go to the ER unless the child is having difficulty breathing.

[mobile covid testing sites](#)

## Mask Policy

We continue to remind our students, regularly, about wearing their masks properly. We are reminding them that their mask should cover their nose and mouth. In addition, students must wear their mask on the school bus. Please check to be sure your child has a mask each day before leaving home. It is a good idea to place an extra mask in their backpack. We just want to keep everyone safe.

## Early Dismissal Procedures

If you need to pick up your child early for an appointment that is close to the end of the school day, **please do so before 3:30pm**. After 3:30 pm, it is very difficult for our front office staff to get students while assisting with dismissal procedures. We appreciate your assistance with this! Thank you!

## HCPSS Emergency Closing Notifications

In times of emergency/weather closings or delays, information is shared through our website, email, and text, Twitter and the HCPSS weather hotline. The school system's operating status can always be found on the [HCPSS Status website](#). [More information about Emergency closings and information sources](#) is provided online.

## BSAP Saturday Math Academy Virtual Spring Program Registration

Registration opens Saturday, January 8, 9:00am until capacity is reached

Families of students in grades 3-12 are invited to register online for this virtual enrichment program, which will be held Saturdays, January 29 through March 12, 2022. Families can request enrollment by registering their child(ren) for the program in HCPSS Connect. Space is limited, and notification will be emailed to families whose registration request is accepted. [Additional program and registration information](#) is available online.

## Please Label Student Belongings

As the temperatures drop, please make sure students are dressed appropriately for the bus stops, as well as for recess. Please make sure students have coats with them for recess. We want to keep students safe and healthy. **Please label all student clothing (coats, sweaters, hats, gloves with your child's name.**

## WFES Lost and Found Items

*Has your child lost a jacket? Hoodie? Hats/Gloves? Water bottle? Lunchbox? We may have it!* Please review the following photos of our lost and found items. Do you see anything that may belong to your child(ren)? Please stop by before Winter Break and claim any lost items. Our lost and found items are in the cafeteria area. You must wear a mask and sign in at the office before proceeding to the cafeteria.

