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Tiger Tales

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

December 3, 2021

Mark Your Calendars

Wednesday, December 15 Schools Close 3-Hours Early (12:45pm)

Wednesday, December 15 Winter Band & Chorus Concert – 6:15pm

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)

Monday, January 24 Schools Closed for Students – Professional Work Day

Friday, January 21 End of Second Quarter

Monday, January 31 Report Cards Issued

School News

MAP Home Reports (Fall 2021)

Students in Grades 1-5 participated in the fall administration of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment in October. MAP home reports are now posted in Synergy for your review. If you require any help with accessing your student's MAP home report, instructions can be found using the [link](#) to "[How can I access my child's MAP test results?](#)"

To access PDF Home reports in Synergy:

- Log in to HCPSS Connect
- Select More Options from the left panel
- Select Report Cards from the middle
- Select the applicable report from the Student's MAP reports section.

You can learn more about the MAP assessment [here](#). If you have any questions about the fall MAP home report, please contact your child's teacher.

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:

- December 15, 2021
- 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

Canvas Inbox for Students

Effective Monday, November 22, elementary school students no longer will have the ability to message each other within the Canvas Inbox. Elementary students will still be able to use the inbox to communicate with their teachers. Please note that this does not apply to Digital Education Center students, who still will have the ability to message both students and teachers.

Updated Volunteer/Observer Vaccine Requirements and Training

Vaccine Verification

Parent volunteers and chaperones who interact with students, and parents/guardians who are conducting classroom observations are required to use the PinPoint platform to show proof of full vaccination **at least five school days in advance**. [Learn how to access and use the PinPoint VaccineCheck platform.](#)

Confidentiality Training Course

Thank you for your interest in volunteering within the Howard County School System! We value our volunteers and the contributions they make to our students and schools.

According to HCPSS Board Policy, all parent volunteers must complete a Confidentiality Training Course about protecting the privacy of our students, staff, and schools.

[View the brief training presentation and print out a certificate of completion](#)

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and child neglect are against the law. Educators, health care workers, police officers, etc. are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect. In addition, school volunteers, community members, and others are expected to report if there is a reason to believe that abuse or neglect possibly occurred. The [Child Abuse and Neglect Training](#) course must be reviewed by all volunteers. Once the material has been reviewed, you must complete, print, and submit the certificate of completion to the school office prior to volunteering with students.

Text Message Access

HCPSS and WFES often communicate important information that we need parents to know immediately via text messages. If you receive our texts, then you do not need to do anything else! If you do not, we highly recommend that you opt-in. Here are the instructions on how to opt-in to text messaging...

- Text the word "YES" to 67587 from the wireless device you wish to receive texts on.
- You will receive an "opt in" message from HCPSS sent from SchoolMessenger.
- Text Y and hit send.
- You will now begin receiving text alerts from WFES and HCPSS.
- [Click here for additional details & troubleshooting](#)
- Please have a close relative, family friend, and daycare provider sign up for HCPSSNews alerts. This is a helpful safeguard on unexpected early dismissal days. Community members or any non-HCPSS can sign up to receive messages [by visiting this sign-up page](#).

American Education Week

The National Education Association was one of the creators and original sponsors of American Education Week.

Distressed that 25 percent of the country's World War I draftees were illiterate and 9 percent were physically unfit, representatives of the NEA and the American Legion met in 1919 to seek ways to generate public support for education.

The conventions of both organizations subsequently adopted resolutions of support for a national effort to raise public awareness of the importance of education. In 1921, the NEA Representative Assembly in Des Moines, Iowa, called for designation of one week each year to spotlight education. In its resolution, the NEA called for: "An educational week ... observed in all communities annually for the purpose of informing the public of the accomplishments and needs of the public schools and to secure the cooperation and support of the public in meeting those needs."

The first observance of American Education Week occurred December 4-10, 1921, with the NEA and American Legion as the cosponsors. A year later, the then U.S. Office of Education joined the effort as a cosponsor, and the PTA followed in 1938.

Other co-sponsors are the U.S. Department of Education and national organizations including the [National PTA](#), the [American Legion](#), the [American Legion Auxiliary](#), the [American Association of School Administrators](#), the [National School Boards Association](#), the [American Federation of Teachers](#), the [American School Counselor Association](#), the [Council of Chief State School Officers](#), the [National School Public Relations Association](#), the [National Association of State Boards of Education](#), the [National Association of Elementary School Principals](#), and the [National Association of Secondary School Principals](#).

American Education Week is always celebrated the week prior to the week of Thanksgiving. ***Due to Covid restrictions, we are not hosting American Education Week visits.***

Update Your Family File

While you are scheduling conferences and accessing report cards, now is the perfect time to 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.

Native American Heritage Month

November is [Native American Heritage Month](#), or as it is commonly referred to, American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month. This month is a time to celebrate rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories and to acknowledge the important contributions of Native people. It is also a time to educate the general public about tribes, to raise general awareness about the challenges Native people have faced both, historically and in the present, and the ways tribal citizens have worked to conquer these challenges.

WFES Rainbow Representative

Rainbow Representatives ensure that schools are allies and advocates for LGBTQIA+ students, staff, and families. The school Rainbow Representative attends quarterly meetings, receives and disseminates information regarding LGBTQIA+ topics of interest to the school and school community as appropriate, and provides instructional support for educators. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact West Friendship Elementary's Rainbow Representative Cassandra Greene at cassandra_greene@hcpss.org.

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.

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 be sure all student clothing (coats, sweaters, hats, gloves) are labeled with your child's name.**

Ready to Read Act Parent Notification

In accordance with Maryland's Ready to Read Act (2019), COMAR(2021), and the request from the Howard County Board of Education, all Howard County Public School System students in grades kindergarten to 5th grade will participate in a screener for identifying potential reading difficulties.

Please see the attached flyer for information. [21-22 Ready to Read Act Parent Notification](#)

School Counseling News

The HCPSS Elementary School Counseling Connection Newsletter is a great resource for students and parents to read together. Included in this November issue you will find information about how to celebrate National Gratitude Month and Native American Heritage Month. Also included is the art of writing Thank You notes and using Meditation to help with focus and concentration.

[November ES Newsletter: Issue 3](#)

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. 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.

Absence Email Reminder

- Excuses for absences from school are required by Maryland law. **Please do not send your child's absent note through Canvas.** All absent notes must be emailed to WFESabsence@hcpss.org and **include student name, date of the absence, and the reason for the absence.** You may attach any documentation from medical professionals, if needed. If this information is not included, the note will not be accepted. This email goes directly to our Attendance Secretary. Thank you in advance for adhering to our absence reporting procedures. **This email is used to report absences only.**

- Please do not send changes to transportation to this email address, as we will not see the changes. Any time there is a change in transportation, and any time your child has an after school activity, you must send a hard copy note to school with your child. Do not send an email, as it may not be seen if there is a substitute in your child's classroom.

Dismissal Arrangements

- All students will be sent home their usual way unless they have a hard copy note with alternate arrangements, signed by their parent/guardian. Please do not expect a child to relay this important information. This often causes confusion. Do not send an email, as it may not be seen if there is a substitute in your child's classroom.
- Students will not be permitted to ride any bus other than the bus which they are assigned. Students have assigned seats on the bus, and seating is limited.

PTA Information

PTA Engagement Survey

The WFES PTA wants to ensure PTA sponsored activities, events, and requests for volunteers are done so in an accessible and equitable way so all parents and caregivers, and their families, who want to engage, feel like they are able to! Please take a few minutes to complete our anonymous PTA Engagement Survey.

[PTA Engagement Survey](#)

Amazon Smile

Here is another way to support the West Friendship Elementary Schools PTA at no extra cost. Shop on Amazon through Amazon Smile. You get the same great deals and benefits offered by Amazon while supporting our school! Just go to smile.amazon.com, and login to Amazon using your regular username and password. Search for and select *West Friendship Elementary School PTA* under charitable organizations, and you are ready to shop! And yes, we know it is spelled wrong on Amazon's page. Unfortunately, we can't change it.

Join the PTA

Becoming a member of the PTA does not mean you must volunteer. It simply means that you are donating to help enhance the school experience for our students. The PTA funds school-wide presentations, family fun events, teacher appreciation activities, and additional items needed by the teachers for their lessons and classrooms.

Family Membership dues is \$25. Join the PTA by visiting the following link:

https://westfriendship.memberhub.com/store/items/113487?fbclid=IwAR27qCNyWKQQ26k_JAz2COW-aW6KFu7xSw-Bm2ST1lllehXWc1V2et-gWsY

Community Information

New HCPSS Community News and Programs Site

In response to community requests for resources, HCPSS' new [Community News and Programs](#) website makes it easy for families to find educational and recreational resources, events and after-school programs beyond the school day by non-profit organizations.

Community organizations requesting their announcements be shared in school newsletters should visit community-programs.hcpss.org for more information. Questions should be directed to the Public Information Office at publicinfo@hcpss.org.

Howard County Library System Glenwood Branch

Reopening and ribbon cutting on Saturday, December 4th at 10:00am. Come for the ribbon cutting and stay for an open house featuring the new makerspace, teen area, builder's barn for kids, demos, games, and more! Visit hclibrary.org for complete details.

Winter Music Department Concerts!

Please join us at the MRHS Auditorium to hear our wonderful student musicians. Tickets are \$5 and good for both nights. Ask about the family rate!

Wednesday, December 15 - Winter Music Concert I 7:00pm

Percussion Ensemble, Concert Choir, Vocal Ensemble GT, Madrigals/Chamber Choir, Concert Strings, Concert Band

Thursday, December 16 - Winter Music Concert II 7:00pm

Mustang Chorale, Symphony Strings, Symphonic Winds, Combined Finale

The MRHS Holiday Jazz Cabaret is Back!

Tuesday, December 21 7:00pm MRHS Atrium & Cafeteria

The Annual Holiday Jazz Cabaret will be held **Tuesday, December 21st at 7pm**. Join friends and family for a relaxing and joyful evening. Enjoy fabulous treats, appetizers, and beverages while listening to some amazing holiday music performed by the **MRHS Jazz Band, Jazz Combo, Vocal Ensemble GT, Madrigals** and several **amazing soloists**. Tickets are \$12 and sold at the door; family pricing is \$40 for 4 or more.