

Kaye M. Breon
Principal

Tiger Tales

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.

November 12, 2021

Mark Your Calendars

- Thursday, November 18** Parent/Teacher Conference Scheduling Window Closed at 4:00pm
- Mon/Tues, Nov. 22 & 23** Virtual Parent/Teacher Conferences – **3 Hr Early Dismissal (12:45pm)**
- Wednesday, November 24** **Schools Closed for Students**
- Thurs/Fri, Nov. 25 & 26** **Schools & Offices Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday**
- Wednesday, December 15** Schools Close 3-Hours Early (12:45pm)
- December 23-31** **Winter Break – Schools Closed**
- January 3** Schools Reopen

School News

Staff News

We want to take this opportunity to thank our entire community for working together to get our students to school safely on Monday morning! I truly appreciate the families who made adjustments to work and personal schedules, banded together, carpoled, and helped us with our arrival. Our staff rose to the occasion, donning emergency vests and embracing the “all hands on deck” mentality. We were able to welcome more than 300 students by car, thanks to everyone’s help! Thanks to all for your flexibility as the circumstances evolved throughout the day on Monday.

In addition, we want to thank the many parents who took the time to pass on kind words, show graciousness, and patience as we worked together to ensure our students got to school safely on Monday. We were surprised that all our buses did not show up at their stops that morning but were thankful they came at the end of the school day. Each day we are happy to come to work because our amazing children and thoughtful community continues to show kindness. We are so thankful for our students, staff, and parents!

This week was National School Psychology Week (NSPW). During this week, the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) promotes activities to recognize school psychologists and advocate for their work. At West Friendship, we are fortunate to have an amazing school psychologist supporting our students, staff, and families. Please join me in celebrating Mrs. Lisa Carter, our school psychologist.

Report cards were made available for review this past Wednesday. We hope you have taken time to go over the document with your child. This is a great way to prepare for the upcoming Parent/Teacher Conferences. The scheduling window for Parent/Teacher Conferences will close on Thursday, November 18th at 4:00pm.

Have a wonderful weekend and take time to enjoy your family!

Ms. Kaye Breon, Principal
Mr. Brian Vanisko, Assistant Principal

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

Report Card Access

Parents/guardians will have access to view report cards at 5:00 p.m. today, Wednesday, November 10.

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

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

In reviewing your child's report card, please be aware that Health and Related Arts Grades will be reported each semester not each quarter. As such, please look for those grades on your child's next report card.

Parent/Teacher Conference Scheduling

Parent/Teacher conferences are an extremely valuable opportunity to talk directly to the teacher(s) of your child/children. This fall, conferences will be held virtually from November 22 -24, with the majority of teachers holding conferences during the afternoon and evening on Monday and Tuesday. Conferences are fifteen minutes in length, and we suggest that you do not schedule back-to-back conferences if you have more than one child.

Fall Conferences will be scheduled with the Language Arts/Homeroom teacher. The conference scheduling window is from **8:30am on Monday, November 8th through 4:00pm on Thursday, November 18th**. To schedule your conference go to <http://www.hcpss.org/connect/> . For additional information please see these directions [SYN073 Parent Conference Parent.pdf](#)

Parents needing/requesting separate conferences, please contact Colleen Green at 410-313-5512 during the scheduling window.

GT Math Conferences with Mr. Haskins

November Conferences will be held for 4th Grade GT math students.

5th Grade GT Math Conferences will be held in February.

Please contact [Colleen Green](#) or [Penny Smith](#) if you have questions or need support. They can be reached at 410-313-5512 during regular school hours.

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.

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.

2021 Holiday Gift Card Drive

Our WFES Holiday Gift Card Drive is now over. Thanks to your incredible contributions, we were able to collect enough gift cards so that all requests can be fulfilled for Thanksgiving and December Holiday Assistance. I would also like to send an amazing THANK YOU to our fabulous WFES PTA who partnered with us for this event. We could not have done it without you! We are so proud of the generosity and support of our school community. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

If you have not previously requested support, and find that you are in need for the holidays or otherwise, please contact WFES School Counselor, Mrs. Schnebly at Leslie_Schnebly@hcpss.org for assistance.

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.

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](#).

PTA Information

PTA Staff Appreciation Committee

Parent/Teacher conferences are fast-approaching and will be held later this month. Those days are always extra-long for our dedicated WFES teachers and staff, so the PTA Staff Appreciation Committee treats them to a meal to make the day a bit easier. If you are interested in making a donation towards the meal purchase, please click on the link below. Thank you for your support and contributions!

<https://westfriendship.memberhub.com/store/items/543098>

If you have any questions or wish to join or support the Staff Appreciation Committee with planning and events, please contact Glenda Hernandez Tittle at glendahtittle@gmail.com

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.

Maryland Stem Festival

All elementary and middle school HCPSS students and families are invited to attend Howard Community College's celebration of the annual **Maryland STEM Festival THIS Saturday, November 13, 2-4 PM**. A range of hands-on STEM activities will be available on HCC's campus in the Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET) building. The Maryland STEM Festival encourages all students, regardless of background or experience, to take a greater interest in STEM, with the hope they will pursue a related career. This statewide month-long festival cultivates a positive environment that inspires children to pursue lucrative STEM careers and encourages businesses to invest in Maryland. The theme for this year's festival is "Health and Wellness". For more information, including a listing of all events, visit <https://marylandstemfestival.org/>.