

HMS Bulletin

October 25, 2024



This is a reminder that starting November 1st, backpacks and bookbags must be stored in student lockers throughout the school day. Students must leave backpacks in their lockers until dismissal time. This decision has been made with student and staff safety in mind. While we understand that backpacks can be convenient for carrying books, computers, and supplies, eliminating them will help create a safer environment for everyone.

Reasons for this change:

1. **Safety and Security:** Requiring all bags to remain in lockers allows us to monitor things that may be brought to school that should not be. It also helps us respond more quickly in case of an emergency.
2. **Clutter-Free Environment:** Without backpacks, our hallways and classrooms will be less cluttered, making it easier for everyone to navigate the school safely.
3. **Focus on Learning:** By limiting personal items, we hope to encourage a focus on education and interaction and minimize distractions during school hours.

Grade-level locker visit times:

- 8th Grade: Arrival at school, after period 2, before & after lunch, and dismissal
- 7th Grade: Arrival at school, after period 2, before & after lunch, and dismissal
- 6th grade: Arrival at school, before & after lunch, before period 6, and dismissal

Helpful Tips and Reminders to make the transition a smooth one:

1. Students should clean out their bookbags of anything they do not need.
2. Students must unpack their bookbags and leave materials and things unused inside their lockers. This includes extra folders, paper, notebooks, etc.
3. Helping your students develop an organizational system will also make the transition smooth. For example, students may want to organize a morning binder and an afternoon binder. Zip binders are also an excellent organizational tool.
4. Water bottles can also be stored in lockers when not in use throughout the day.
5. Cell phones can also remain in lockers as they must be off and away per the Howard County policy.

The idea is not to carry everything in the backpack around with students all day but to minimize the amount of things they carry around.

We understand that this may be an adjustment for students. We encourage students to learn their locker combinations, unpack their bookbags, organize their belongings, and practice opening their locker.

Safety is our top priority, and we appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we implement this school-wide expectation. Please immediately contact us with any questions, concerns, or locker trouble.

Ms. L. Smith & Ms. Thompson

Attention Hammond Middle School Families,

As part of a grant from the State of Maryland's Connected Devices Program, our school is partnering with the [Bright Minds Foundation](#) and the Howard County Government to provide qualifying families with one free Chromebook and charger per household. Your family can use this free new HP Chromebook to connect with our schools, access community services, or for any other purpose that would benefit you.

In order to qualify for a free Chromebook and charger, you must meet the following criteria:

- Your family has not already received a free device from one of these organizations: Community Action Council of Howard County, Howard County Office of Children and Families, or Making Change;
- You are the parent or legal guardian of a student currently enrolled in HCPSS;
- You meet one of the income qualifications outlined on the application form; and,
- The application form is fully completed.

If you qualify for a Chromebook and have completed the Google Form application, you will be notified by Hammond Middle School when the device is available in November/December for pick up. At that time, an adult family member (at least 18 years old) will need to come to the school to receive the device. When you pick up the device, you will receive information about setting up the device and how to access technical support. These are not HCPSS devices, and will not come loaded with any HCPSS educational applications. HCPSS is not responsible or liable for the operation, loss, or repair of your Chromebook or charger. Families will be responsible for their own internet service. Families will have 5 days to exchange any non-functioning devices. Please read the instructions and complete the Free Chromebooks for Eligible HCPSS Parents or Guardians Google Form at this link <https://forms.gle/tgR2a3v2teKvbXuu5> by **Friday November 1, 2024**. If you have any questions, please contact Mel Thompson, Lora Koehler, or Lisa Smith at HMS.

We look forward to partnering with the Bright Minds Foundations, Howard County Government, and you for this incredible opportunity!

IMPORTANT DATES

October 29: HMS Flu Clinic (**register by October 15*)

October 30: End of 1st Marking Period

October 30: HMS Family Engagement Night - 5pm HMS Media Center (*see details below*)

October 31: Professional Work and Development Day - Schools Closed for Students

October 31: Complete or Renew Your FARMS Application by today

November 5: Election Day - Schools & Offices Closed

November 8: Report Cards Issued

November 8: Picture Retake Day @ 8:30am (*see below for more information*)

November 13: HMS Hearing/Vision Screening (*Note: All 8th grade students and students who are new to Maryland will be screened*)

November 21: HMS Hearing/Vision Clinic Rescreen

November 25: Parent Teacher Conferences (*in-person*)

November 26-27: Parent Teacher Conferences (*virtual*)

November 28-29: Schools & Offices closed

December 17: HMS Spelling Bee 5pm - HMS Media Center

December 23 - January 1: Winter Break

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONGRATULATIONS to Mrs. Smallenbroek!

HMS is the home of mathematics teacher (and mathematics instruction team leader), Mrs. Jennifer Smallenbroek! She has been named the **2024 Maryland Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM) Outstanding Middle School Mathematics Teacher of the Year!**

Mrs. Smallenbroek was honored at the 2024 MCTM Outstanding Educator Awards Banquet on October 16th. HMS beams with pride as we celebrate Mrs. Smallenbroek's exceptional dedication to access, equity, and student empowerment through exemplary mathematics teaching and learning for all students!



Hammond Middle School



ABSENTEES & RETAKE DAY

Friday, November 8, 2024

You may have your portraits retaken on this day.

The **entire portrait package must be returned.**

Please have your child bring the portrait package to the photographer on retake day.

Parents of students who were absent should contact the main office for an order envelope if they wish to order portraits. Please visit us at: www.schoolpix.com to order additional portraits.

School Pictures, Inc

[SchoolPic_Flyer_FRONT.pdf](#)

[SchoolPic_Flyer_BACK.pdf](#)

Complete or Renew Your FARMS Application by October 31st

HCPSS participates in the Free and Reduced-price Meals (FARMS) program. **Qualification** is based on family size and income, and enrollment is confidential.

Participation in FARMs qualifies students for a wide range of opportunities and resources beyond breakfast and lunch, including free college applications, free or reduced JumpStart tuition, discounted internet through the Comcast Internet Essentials program, and more.

Families must submit a new application every school year by Oct. 31. During the first 30 school days, students with FARMs eligibility from the prior school year will continue to receive benefits. Any student whose family has not filled out an application by the 30th school day will have their status changed to full pay until a new application is received.

Parents/guardians are highly encouraged to fill out the applications as soon as possible. It is very important that applications are filled out accurately and completely. Families can:

- [Apply online Links to an external site.](#)
- Apply by mail: Paper applications can be picked up in the Food and Nutrition Service Office (5451 Beaverkill Rd, Columbia, MD 21044). Applications can be returned to your child's school or mailed to: HCPSS Food & Nutrition Service Office, 10910 Clarksville Pike, Ellicott City, MD 21042.

If you have questions regarding the program, please visit www.hcpss.org/FARMsLinks or call Food and Nutrition Services at 410-313-6743

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Contests and Celebration, 2024/25

On behalf of the Howard County Office of Human Rights & Equity and the Howard County Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Commission students are invited to participate in several exciting contests. Each year the MLK Holiday Commission recognizes students with several contests and awards, including a Poster, Essay, and Oratory competition for grades K-12 whose outreach efforts align with Dr. King's message and vision. The closing date for all contests is November 15, 2024. For more information and deadline dates, please see the attached [flier](#).

Resources in our Community

The Howard County Community Resources and Services is currently collecting [winter clothing](#) for the October 19, [Cold Weather Winter Gear](#) clothing distribution event at the North Laurel Community Center.

After hours mental health support: If you have an immediate need for help with depression, suicidal thoughts, or other serious mental health issues, please contact:

- Call or text 988
- Grassroots Crisis Intervention at 410-531-6677

- The Maryland Crisis Hotline: Dial 211 and then choose option 1
- The Crisis Text Line: Text 741741 and a trained counselor will respond.
- The National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255

After hours safety concern: We encourage you to utilize Safe Schools Maryland, an anonymous and free system to report any school or student safety concerns, including mental health concerns. Safe Schools Maryland operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Anyone can call the tip line (1-833-MD-B-SAFE / 1-833-632-7233), [complete an online form](#), or use the Safe Schools Maryland app.

REMINDERS

HMS Family Engagement Night

We are excited to invite you to our next **Family Engagement Night** on **Wednesday, October 30th**, from **5-7 p.m.** in the **HMS Media Center**. Our focus for the evening will be **data conversations**.

On **September 26th and 27th**, many of our students took the **Reading and Math MAP (Measures for Academic Progress)** assessment. However, please note that **8th-grade** students enrolled in **GT ELA, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, or Statistics** did not take this year's MAP assessment. While you are still welcome to join us, we will be reviewing older data for these students. Additionally, **MCAP scores**, which apply to all students, were recently sent home and will be discussed during the presentation.

During our "Data & Dinner" event, we will share your child's most recent Reading and Math MAP data from this fall's September sessions. Each registered participant will receive a personalized folder with your student's data and a space for reflection. We'll guide you through interpreting the scores and exploring ways to support further academic growth.

To ensure all families can attend, we will offer a **children's area** during the session. Kids can enjoy a showing of *Monster's Inc.* and participate in supplemental activities. Please be sure to account for any additional children attending in your registration.

RSVP Today! (<https://forms.gle/zk11HLCtypakxTgz6>)

By registering, you'll help us prepare for dinner and create your personalized folders.

HAMMOND MIDDLE SCHOOL

DATA & DINNER

FREE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT NIGHT!

Wednesday, 10/30/24
5-7 pm
HMS Media Center
Childcare provided!

RSVP TODAY! Join us for dinner, then dive into data! Each registered

Feedback from last year's Data Dive:
"Extremely informative"
"The folder is awesome!"
"Will you offer this session again?"

Update Your Family File

Family files that have not been updated for the 24/25 school year will receive a paper copy brought home by their student. Please complete and return to the front office. **The completion of the Family File is essential to your student's participation in field trips, dances, and other fun activities throughout the year.** We want HMS to be the first middle school to have 100% of its families complete this important task!

HMS Spelling Bee

The Bee is Back! Students can now sign up for the 24-25 HMS Spelling Bee! Students must complete the Google Form to sign up: <https://forms.gle/pbaJKmjBGBkzp9UJ8> The Spelling Bee will be held on **Tuesday, December 17 at 5:00PM** in the HMS Media Center.

Health Room News

Please perform daily health checks and keep sick children at home:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore Throat
- Body Aches
- Abdominal Cramps
- Diarrhea

- Nausea/Vomiting

If your child requires medication (prescription or over the counter) during the 2024-2025 school year, your child’s health care provider must complete a [medication form](#) and/or an [Epi-Pen Care](#) form. All prescribed medications must be in properly labeled containers that include the following information:

- Student name
- Medication name
- Dose to be given
- Time & Frequency of medication
- Prescriber’s name & signature
- Date of medication order

Pharmacy labels will usually contain this information. Over-the-counter medications should be in new, unopened containers labeled with the student’s name.

Feel free to contact our health team with any questions: christina_toler@hcpss.org karisma_rencher@hcpss.org

Reporting your child's absence

Need to report an absence? Please email your absence notes/questions to: HMSabsence@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 may not be honored. Please Note: Absences are unexcused until an email or note is received.

STAY CONNECTED

Families may find it useful to bookmark the following web-pages where information will be continually updated and posted:

- [HMS Website](#)
- [HMS Twitter](#)
- [HMS Instagram](#)
- [HCPSS Website](#)
- [HCPSS News site](#)
- [HCPSS Help site](#)

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.

Hammond Middle School | 8100 Aladdin Drive, Laurel, MD 20723 | (410) 880-5830 | hms.hcpss.org

