

Week of 11/14/21



Hollifield Station Elementary School

Dear HSES Families,

The COVID-19 pandemic has created hardships for so many of our students, staff, families and neighbors, and every individual has faced unique challenges during this difficult time.

We are grateful for the return of students to our classrooms, and despite challenges, this process has been successful overall. I credit students, staff members and parents/guardians for helping to keep our school healthy and safe by taking our COVID mitigation strategies seriously.

My fellow principals and I have been made aware of many concerns regarding a decline in the level of civility during some interactions between parents/guardians and staff across the County and a few at our school.

Recently, HCPSS Superintendent Dr. Michael Martirano reminded the community about the importance of civility during interactions with school staff, noting that the “school health team, teachers, bus drivers and other staff members are exceptionally dedicated individuals doing their best and working their hardest to nurture, educate and protect students during extremely challenging circumstances. Quite simply, they are heroes, and they deserve our gratitude and respect at all times, even when they must carry out a protocol or practice that someone doesn’t agree with.”

I encourage everyone to read the [Superintendent’s full statement \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

As Dr. Martirano mentioned in his statement, our children are watching and learning from our interactions. I encourage every parent/guardian to remain engaged with your child's teachers and school administrators, but urge that you please do so in a respectful and civil manner. It is my expectation that our staff members will extend the same level of civility to you.

Please remember that our educators have many responsibilities in the classroom as they support their students. While our expectation is that parents' inquiries and emails should be responded to within two schools days, please be patient if you do not hear back within this timeframe. If your inquiry is time sensitive and urgent, I encourage you to call the school or email me directly.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

Please enjoy this week's edition of the Hollifield Herald. Important topics include:

- Important Dates
- Inclusive Schools Week
- HCPSS Attendance Procedures
- PTA News

Important Dates

11/16	7:00 p.m. PTA Meeting (Virtual)
11/17	National Educational Support Professionals Day
11/17-11/22	Scholastic Book Fair (information provided in 11/5 Herald)
11/22 & 11/23	Parent/Teacher Conferences (Virtual -- Information provided in 11/5 Herald)
11/24	Schools Closed - Parent/Teacher Conferences
11/25 & 26	School Closed - Thanksgiving Holiday
12/6-12/10	Inclusive Schools Week
12/15	School closes - 3 Hours Early
12/21	7 PM Concert advanced ensembles (Fifth grade band, Fifth-grade strings, Fourth grade strings and fifth grade chorus -- Details to come)
12/23 - 1/2	Winter Break - Schools closed
1/19/22	Vision and Hearing Screening for K, 1 and New Students

Inclusive Schools Week December 6-10: *Inclusive Schools Week 2021: Rebuilding Our Inclusive Community Together* will be celebrated December 6-10 to promote the phenomenal impact that inclusion best practices have on school communities for all students.

HCPSS Attendance Procedures

Research is clear that showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic and social success starting from kindergarten and continuing through high school. Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school or even facing social challenges.

- Missing 10% (or about 18 days of a school year) can drastically affect a student's academic success.
- By the 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that can indicate if a student is at risk for dropping out of high school.
- In the 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.

Student attendance is a major point of focus for the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Starting in 2018-2019, MSDE lowered the chronic absenteeism rate from 20% to 10% which means that at 10% a student should be receiving support and interventions to improve their absenteeism.

Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) believes that attendance is key for student success. Per Policy 9010, HCPSS defines exemplary attendance as a final attendance rate of 96% or more of the student year.

In support of achieving Exemplary Attendance for all students, we are sharing with you a comprehensive approach for attendance supports and interventions.

- If a student has missed 5% of their monthly attendance days (as few as 1-2 days a month), parents will receive a Care and Concern Phone Call and letter from their school. This step will allow staff members to coordinate with families to determine how the student can be supported for better attendance.
- If a student has missed 10% of their monthly attendance days (this is defined as chronic absenteeism by MSDE), parents will receive a 10% Chronic Absenteeism Attendance Letter. Parents and students may be scheduled for an attendance conference. Other interventions and supports may also be used in an effort to assist the student.
- If a student has missed 15% of their monthly attendance days, in addition to the interventions and supports at 5% and 10%, these students may require an attendance support plan. Students may also be referred to the Central Attendance Team.

- If a student has missed 20% of their monthly attendance days, parents will receive a 20% Emergency Chronic Absenteeism Letter or Habitual Truancy Letter. Students may be referred to Project Attend and may be referred to the State's Attorney's Office for habitual truancy.

With the collaborative effort of HCPSS parents, staff and students, we are confident that all students can have successful attendance. This will improve student success in school and in future life.

*Reminder, all previous Hollifield HeraldNewsletters can be found on our website.



PTA Updates:

Save the date: COMMUNITY PTA meeting will be held on November 16 at 7 pm!

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6265445192?pwd=dWRhZWWhPZklETU52aWhOQWJQRfgrdz09>

Meeting ID: 626 544 5192 Passcode: 8mi76q

SPIRIT WEAR: We are excited to announce that our NEW spirit wear store is OPEN! This year, we've partnered with 1st Place Spiritwear, and we are excited to share all of the new Husky items and designs! In a change from previous years, our online store will be open year-round, so there is no worrying that you have missed the window to order! We hope you are as excited as we are to show your Husky pride!

<https://1stplacespiritwear.com/schools/MD/Ellicott%20City/Hollifield+Station+Elementary+School>

****REFLECTIONS Deadline extended to Nov 15th**** The school PTA is excited to launch the 'Reflections' art program at Hollifield Station this school year. Reflections is a nationwide arts recognition and achievement program sponsored by the PTA. There is an annual theme/topic and students have the opportunity to submit their completed works of art in one or all of these arts categories: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography, Visual Arts. This year's topic is: *I Will Change the World By...* Entry forms and guidelines will be sent home with students. Completed Entry Forms and project can be placed in the Reflections box in the school's lobby. Last day to drop off is MONDAY, November 15th. For questions please email: reflection.hses@gmail.com.

Soliciting a Family Fun/School Assemblies Chair for HSES PTA:

School Assemblies: We are planning to resume holding in-person PTA programming in 2022, including school assemblies. This is a great opportunity to help our kids get back to normal. We're seeking volunteers to help plan one or more school assemblies this spring. We anticipate this will be a 2-5 hour commitment. Please reach out if you might be interested or have any questions.

Family Fun: We are planning to resume holding in-person PTA programming in 2022, including family fun activities. We have tentative plans to hold an international night and a blacktop carnival. This is a great opportunity to help our kids get back to normal. We're seeking volunteers to help plan these events with a minimum commitment of 5 hours. Please reach out if you might be interested or have any questions.