

Dear HSES Families,

Please enjoy this week's edition of the Hollifield Herald 8/30/21.

Included in this newsletter:

Important Dates

Frequently asked questions

PTA Information shared in separate alert

Important Dates:

September 6th	Schools Closed - Labor Day
September 7th	Schools Closed - Rosh Hashanah
September 13th	6:30 - 7:30 p.m. 1st and 2nd Grade -- Back to School Night
September 14th	6:00 - 7:30 p.m. 3rd - 5th -- Back to School Night GT (6:00 - 6:30 p.m.)
September 16th	Schools closed - Yom Kippur

Frequently Asked Questions

What safety measures are in place to help ensure the health of our students?

Per Howard County Public School System and CDC guidelines:

- Masks are worn at all times except when eating/drinking.
- Frequent hand washing/ hand sanitizing throughout the day

Outdoor seating option

- Tables and chairs will be provided

- A tent will arrive soon.
- Space for about 36 students per lunch shift
- Assigned lunch monitor
- Assigned seats
- Available as weather and staff permit
- Parents may request their child be considered to eat outside. Lunch Preference Form -- <https://forms.gle/o1TuxJdimn89QTH76>

Indoor seating

- Assigned seating
 - Limits to the number of students at a table
 - Plexiglass shields
 - Masks will be worn at all times except when eating
 - Assigned lunch monitors
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- All staff are required to either provide proof of vaccination or submit to weekly testing.

What schools don't have MERV 13 air filters and what is being done to ensure safe indoor air quality?

MERV 13 air filters are unable to be installed in the HVAC equipment serving most areas at Glenwood Middle School, and parts of Hanover Hills Elementary School, Harper's Choice Middle School, Swansfield Elementary School, Waverly Elementary School, and Wilde Lake Middle School.

The HVAC systems at these schools use Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) HVAC systems which utilize 1/2-inch thick MERV 8 air filters which are unable to be upgraded to MERV 13 since 1/2-inch MERV 13 filters are not manufactured. These VRF systems are coupled with separate Dedicated Outdoor Air System (DOAS) units which utilize

MERV 13 air filters to create an overall higher-efficiency system to mitigate environmental concerns in the school.

Are there specific requirements for the arrangement of desks in rooms?

No. The expectation is for schools to return to normalized instruction which includes classroom desk arrangements that enable whole group instruction, small group instruction, group work, and independent rotations. Due to the number of students and staff in the building each day, social distancing is not a feasible mitigation effort. In alignment with CDC recommendations that when one mitigation can't be followed, others are emphasized, HCPSS has placed even greater emphasis on strategies such as universal masking and proper mask wearing, required vaccinations or weekly testing for all staff, regular hand washing and access to hand sanitizer, opportunities for outdoor eating and other cafeteria protocols, and enhanced air filtration efforts.

What instructional supports are in place for students who have to quarantine?

Only unvaccinated students who are identified as close contacts must quarantine. Vaccinated students will not be required to quarantine unless they receive a positive test or are displaying symptoms.

If a student is required to quarantine and be out of school for an extended period of time, HCPSS has put in place the following instructional supports:

- Students will access assignments and instructional resources online through Canvas. Staff are expected to post all assignments in Canvas for each class or subject in a timely manner at the start of each unit.
- Additionally, students will have access to synchronous supports during designated times of the week. These times will be scheduled during teacher program implementation periods that occur before or after school during the teacher duty day.

Will students share classroom materials?

Yes, as part of a return to normalized instruction, students may be asked to share materials including school supplies, art materials, etc.

Hollifield Station will minimize the use of shared materials, but as shared above, there will be times that shared materials will be used. Staff will ensure that the students use hand sanitizer and sanitize materials.

Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Because of the many factors affecting the efficiency of environmental transmission, the relative risk of fomite transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is considered low compared with direct contact, droplet transmission, or airborne transmission.” The CDC clarified that in rare cases, SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted between people by touching surfaces an ill person has recently coughed or sneezed on, and then directly touching the mouth, nose, or eyes. Therefore, hand hygiene is a barrier to fomite transmission and has been associated with lower risk of infection.

Does my child have to bring their Chromebook back and forth to school?

Students in Kindergarten and 1st grade will not have devices personally assigned at this time. They will borrow devices at school and will not bring their devices home.

Students in 2nd - 5th can choose to leave their devices at school or take them home each day. There are computer carts available for students to leave their devices at school.

For any repairs or costs information, please see the county website information:

<https://www.hcpss.org/devices/repair-costs/>

More information on student devices can be found on the HCPSS website:

<https://www.hcpss.org/devices/students/>

Will a virtual option be offered for the 2021-2022 school year?

At the Board of Education meeting on June 24, 2021, it was announced that a fully virtual instructional delivery option will be available to students in grades K-6 who committed to fully digital instruction in the spring. This digital option is a one-year solution designed to help bridge younger students back to normalized, in-person instruction as HCPSS moves beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

HCPSS has developed a virtual option for 2021-2022 for students who will likely be unable to receive a vaccine by the start of the 2021-2022 school year due to their age. Participation in the fully digital instruction model will require a full-year commitment.

Students in grades 7-12 who expressed interest in remaining virtual for the 2021-2022 school year will return to fully in-person instruction this fall. The [HCPSS Home and Hospital program](#) remains an option for students who medically qualify.

The K-6 virtual option will not be available to students who must quarantine due to mandated COVID-19 protocols. That solution is still being developed as HCPSS learns more about what the quarantining protocols will be in the fall.

As always, please feel free to reach out to administration with any questions or concerns. Have a great first week of school!

Sincerely,

Amanda Wadsworth