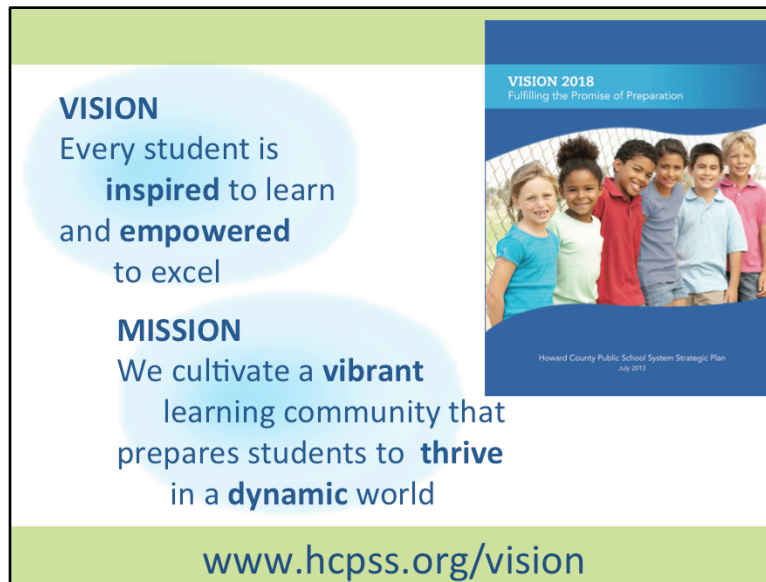




Back to School Night

Dayton Oaks Elementary School

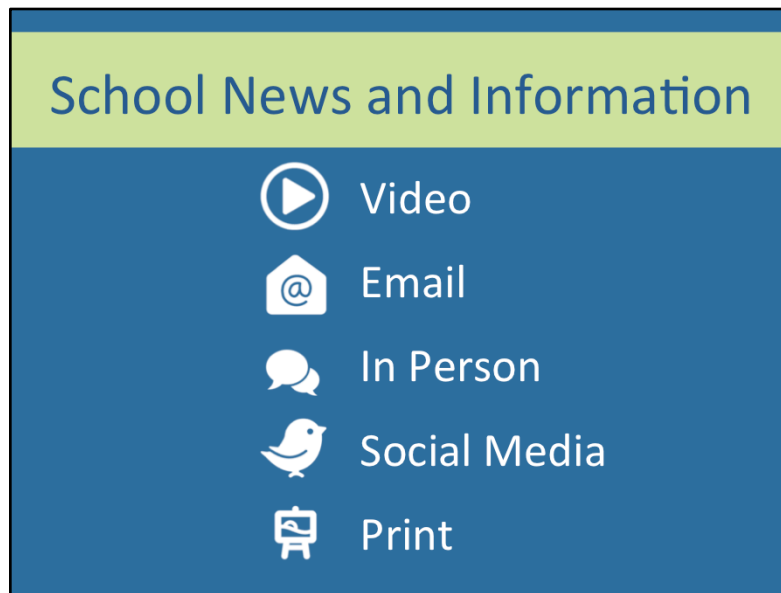


Howard County Public School System is entering the 4th year of a 5-year strategic plan:
Vision 2018: Fulfilling the promise of preparation.

Vision 2018 is our roadmap toward becoming a world-class school system that fulfills the *promise of preparation* to every student. The promise of preparation means that every child develops the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in college, without the need for remedial courses, or in a high-wage career by the time they graduate high school.

Our school system **vision**: Every student is inspired to learn and empowered to excel.

Our **mission**: We cultivate a vibrant learning community that prepares students to thrive in a dynamic world.



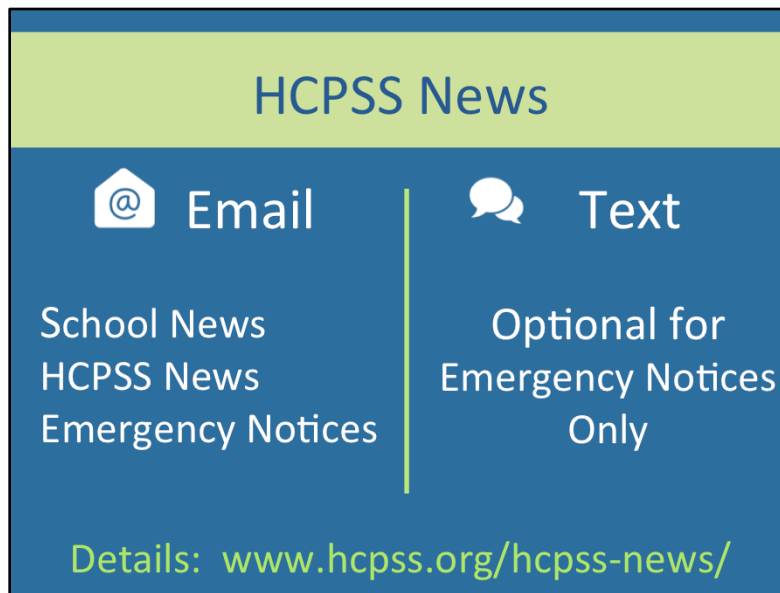
School Communications – OVERVIEW

Engaging parents and families as partners in education is a key priority of the HCPSS Strategic Plan, and is one of our school's highest priorities. We use several communications tools to keep parents informed of what's happening in the school and provide the information you need to make informed decisions regarding your child's education.

Often – personal communications are best.

Most important though, is that you feel comfortable reaching out to teachers and administrators whenever you have a concern or question. We're happy to meet with parents, have you visit the classroom – call the school office with questions or to set up a convenient time. We also value parent involvement in school activities.

Feel free to contact any teacher or administrator via Email, or make an appointment to meet to discuss your concerns.



Parents receive news and announcements from our school and from the school system via the HCPSS News service.

Parents are automatically registered for this service. Email messages are delivered to the contact information that you provide in the Family File.

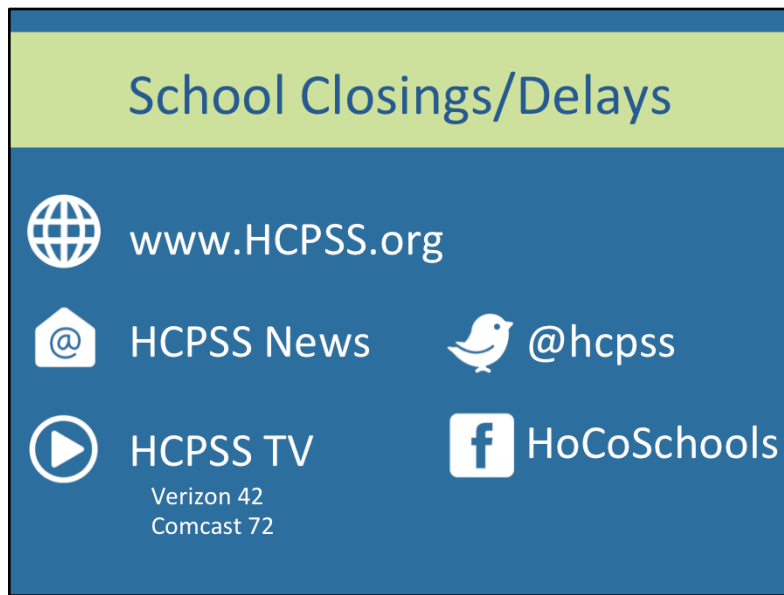
You will receive via email:

- School newsletters & other communications
- System-level announcements
- Emergency notifications (school closings/delays).

Parents are given the option to receive text messages. New parents are sent a text message to opt-in for text alerts. – if you didn't receive this, visit www.hcpss.org/hcpss-news/ to troubleshoot. Text alerts are sent to the mobile phone number identified in the Family File.

If you were already opted-in to receive text messages last year, and your phone number has not changed, you do not need to opt-in again.

Community members and others can sign up for this messaging service at www.hcpss.com/hcpss-news (or visit the home page www.hcpss.org)



School Delays and Closings (usually weather-related) are communicated through several channels:

- HCPSS homepage: www.hcpss.org - this is the first and most complete source of information
- HCPSS News emails and texts
- Social media: Twitter & Facebook
- HCPSS TV – channel 42 (Verizon) and 72 (Comcast)



Our school website is a one-stop destination where you can quickly find:

- School calendar
- Announcements and news
- Academic departments
- Student activities, sports, clubs
- Staff directory and email links
- Quick Links to HCPSS Connect, system website, and other resources

It provides mobile access and user-friendly navigation.

Social Media

[School name] Twitter: [@hcpss_does](#)



HCPSS Facebook: [www.Facebook.com/HoCoSchools](#)

HCPSS Twitter: [www.Twitter.com/HCPSS](#)

Interact with the Superintendent:

Twitter: [www.Twitter.com/SuperHCPSS](#)

Blog: [superintendent.hcpss.org](#)



Link to our social media sites:

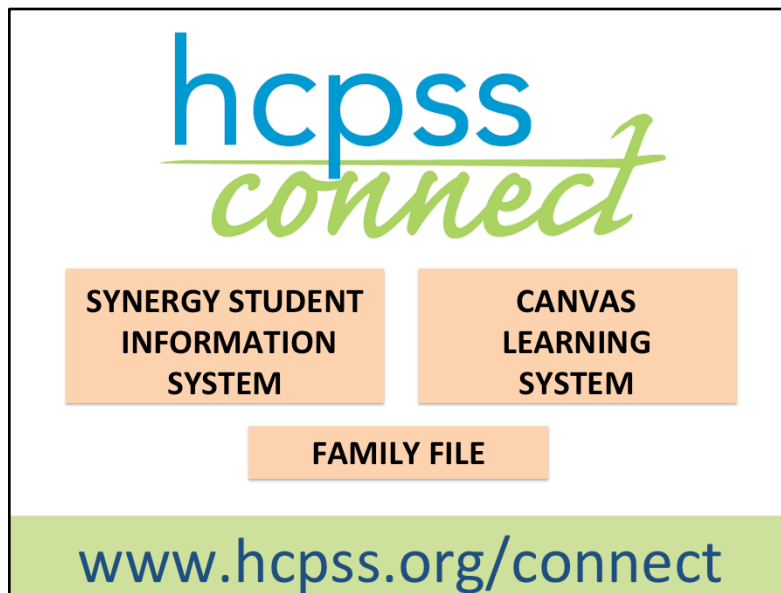
- Get up-to-the-minute updates, news, student and school happenings, and announcements
- Interact with the school and system



The HCPSS Mobile App is available free to download for iPhones, iPad, and Android devices in the app stores (search for “HCPSS”).

The app makes it quick and easy to find the information you need, when you need it. It provides:

- Simplified access to information
- On-the-go access and quick links
- Compiles messages and calendar dates from multiple schools as well as district information, if you have children attending other schools as well.



HCPSS Connect is the one-stop portal to access Synergy, Canvas, and the Family File.

The **Synergy** Student Information is the source for official student records & grades. It gives teachers, administrators, and parents with the digital tools to easily access student information.

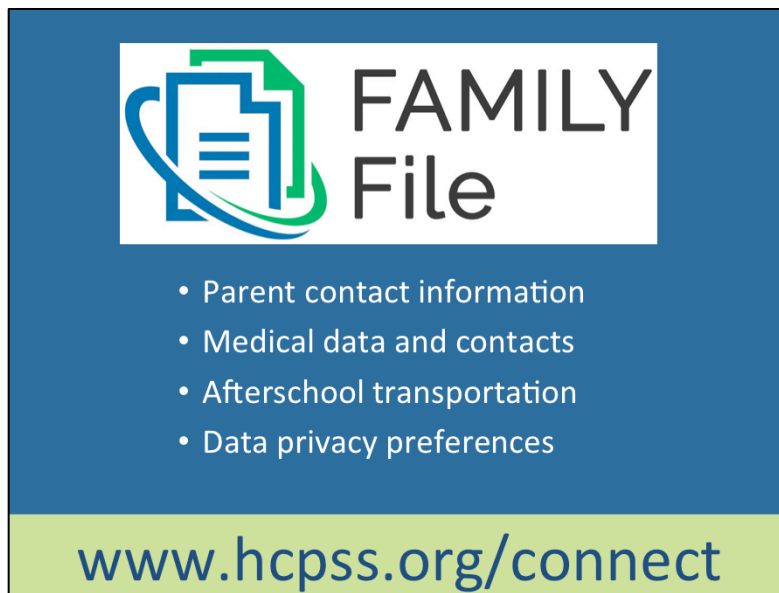
The **Canvas Learning System** gives teachers, parents, and students tools to communicate, collaborate, and connect.

Both systems are extremely easy to learn and to use.

Find full details and instructions online at **www.hcpss.org/connect**

Benefits of HCPSS Connect for Parents, Students & Teachers:

- Improved & consistent user experience
- Common digital platform for all schools & grades
- Improved communication and collaboration
- Anytime/anywhere across multiple devices
- Single sign-on - 1 user/pass for HCPSS Connect



The **Family File** on HCPSS Connect provides important information about your student. All information is confidential.

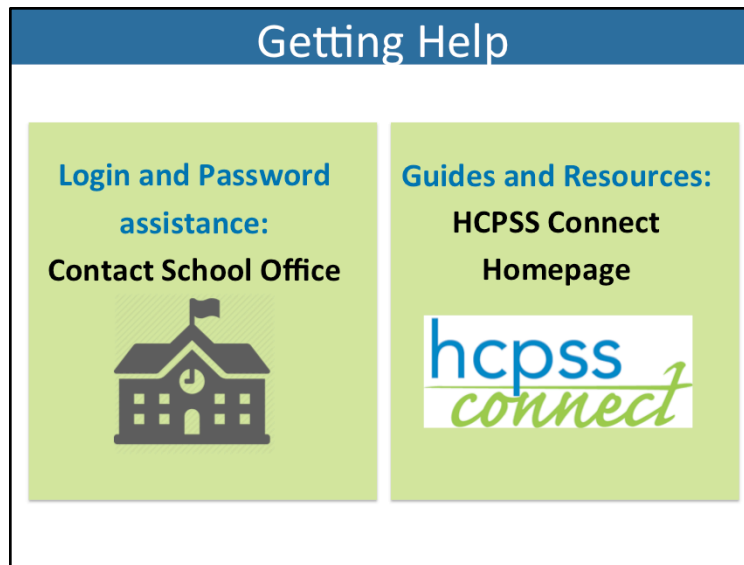
It is important that parents update the Family File with current data about your student including:

- Parent emails and phone numbers
- student medical contact data
- afterschool transportation options
- data privacy options

Log into HCPSS Connect and click the **My Account** tab. Save your changes by clicking the **Update Account** button.

Family File now remains open throughout the school year, so you can make changes at any time they occur.

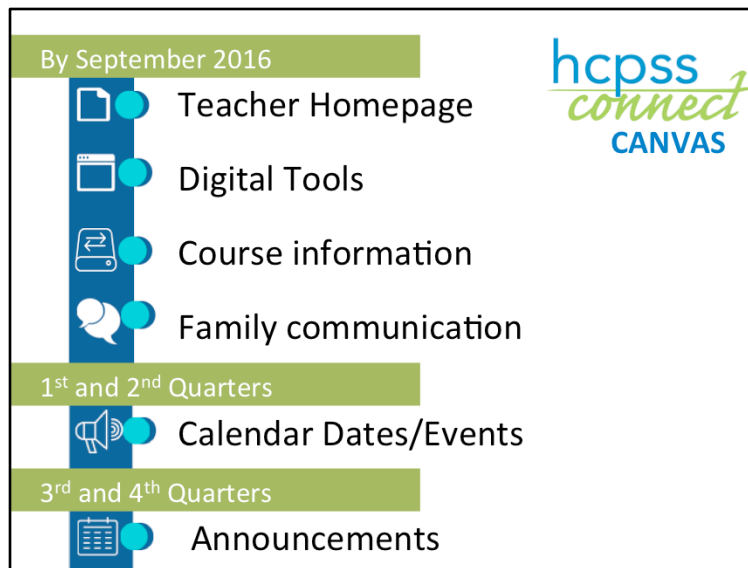
Parents without online access can provide this information through a paper “Emergency Procedure and Confidential Student Information” form. Contact the school office for a copy of this form.



Parents will continue to use the same log in credentials as in prior years.

Parents of students new to HCPSS are mailed their login information (US Mail)

- For help with your login or password: call the School Office
- For help in using Canvas, Synergy, or the Family File, see the many guides and resources on the HCPSS Connect homepage (www.hcpss.org/connect)



CANVAS EXPECTATIONS for teachers the 2016-2017 school year:

This year all teachers will be posting information in the Canvas area in HCPSS Connect.

Targets for each quarter:

- Teacher Homepage - Update and maintain teacher homepage
- Navigation - Set the course navigation to hide and show appropriate Canvas items
- Digital Tools - Include information regarding digital tools such as websites or applications that require an account on teacher homepage
- Course information - Transfer or update content from previous year's course (s) into current year's course(s)
- Family Communication - Share links or instructional tools with families

Calendar Dates - Share class/grade specific dates and events with families and students using the Canvas calendar.

Announcements - Communicate information with students and families using announcements at least once a quarter either through the teacher course or grade level course.



Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is the name for the standardized reading, writing and mathematics assessments implemented in all Maryland schools. PARCC assessments are directly aligned to the Common Core standards. PARCC replaced the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) for math and reading/English language arts and the High School Assessments in English 10 and Algebra I.

Changes to the PARCC Assessment:

Last year the PARCC consortium shortened the overall testing duration:

1. There is just one window for English Language Arts and Math—30 days in Spring.
2. The tests are shorter by about 90 minutes overall.
3. Students have 6-7 PARCC testing sessions (vs. 8 or 9 during the 1st year PARCC was implemented).

PARCC benefits:

- Indicates how closely students, beginning in Grade 3, are on track to graduate college- and career-ready.
- Gives teachers regular results to guide learning and instruction.
- Provides data comparable across districts and states.

Scoring:

The PARCC assessments are on a 5 point scale. 1-Did not yet meet expectations, 2-Partially met expectations, 3-Approached expectations, 4-Met Expectations, and 5-Exceeded expectations:

- In grades 3-8, ratings of 4-5 indicate students are academically well-prepared to engage successfully in further study.
- In high school courses, a 4-5 indicates students are on track to graduate prepared for colleges and careers and in future years will be used by in state community colleges for placement in credit bearing courses.
- Students hand-carry results home in the first few weeks of the following school year.



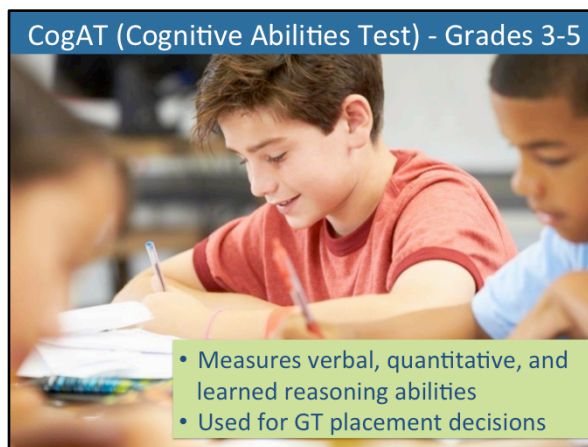
MAP (or Measures of Academic Progress) is an online test used in Grades 1-8. MAP allows us to assess where a student is performing, and how they've grown in achievement, several times each year. All Elementary and Middle schools will participate in MAP.

MAP gives teachers timely feedback on student progress throughout the school year that they can use this information to adjust instruction effectively.

MAP provides many advantages:

- It assesses proficiency in Math and Language usage in addition to Reading.
- It is computer-adaptive – i.e. the questions adapt in real-time to the student's proficiency level. This appeals to students, because it isn't a typical "mastery" test.
- It is implemented several times during the year and provides quick, actionable feedback to teachers
- It is directly aligned to Common Core standards.
- It provides information on a student's year to year growth.
- It takes less time than the previous HCPSS quarterly assessments.

Students hand-carry results home a few weeks after the testing window ends.



CogAT – Grades 3-5

CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) is used to make student placement decisions for G/T programs. CogAT measures students' verbal, quantitative and nonverbal reasoning abilities: the three areas most closely related to success in school.

We know that students who participate in our Gifted and Talented program are well-prepared for the rigorous opportunities that come later in high school and college. Our goal is to widen access to enriching learning opportunities for all students. CogAT is only one of many pieces of data that are looked by a school based committee to make placement decisions.

The CogAT provides a wealth of data that is not measured by other tests. This data is very useful in identifying students who would benefit from GT coursework, and is valuable to teachers of all students in tailoring instruction to meet student needs:

- CogAT measures learned reasoning abilities. These include abilities developed through both in-school or out-of-school experiences. Each of the three subtest areas make use of multiple test formats. This increases both the fairness and the validity of the scores.
- The Verbal portion of the test measures flexibility, fluency, and adaptability in reasoning and solving verbal problems. These play an important role in reading comprehension, critical thinking, writing, and virtually all verbal learning tasks.
- The Quantitative portion measures quantitative reasoning skills that are significantly related to problem solving in mathematics and other disciplines.
- The Nonverbal portion measures a student's ability to invent and implement strategies for solving novel problems.

Results are mailed home with placement recommendations in the Spring.

Science in Grades K-5

Each quarter of science instruction includes a unit based upon one or more core ideas in:

- Earth/Space science
- Life science (biology)
- Physical science (chemistry and physics)



The HCPSS science curriculum integrates science and engineering practices with important disciplinary ideas from the three major scientific disciplines: earth/space science, life science (biology), and physical science (chemistry and physics).

Students have science instruction each quarter. The units are designed to integrate the Three Dimensions of NGSS. They focus on an overarching question, relate to real life, and typically involve applying the science learned to solve an engineering problem.



HCPSS now offers online school menus through a website and mobile app by Nutrislice.

The interactive menus are designed to be more convenient and informative, providing access to up-to-the-minute updated content anytime, anywhere.

The innovative school menu site features nutrition and allergen information for all Howard County school meal items, both breakfast and lunch, and includes:

- carb counts
- allergen filters
- food descriptions and photos
- menu item rating system
- links to MySchoolBucks pre-payment options
- monthly menu email subscription sign-up
- and more

Menus are available in four languages.

Options for using the interactive menus:

- Online: hcpss.nutraslice.com
- Download the free app, "School Lunch by Nutrislice," in the Google Play or App stores.



Communications technology, including social media, is a fact of modern life. Learning to use technology effectively and responsibly is an important part of every student's education.

HCPSS has launched a year-long community campaign to encourage responsible use of technology and social media. Look for posters like this, and other announcements and upcoming events for students and families to explore this important topic. Follow our progress online at **#lastingimpressions**.

Use of Personal Devices in School:

Elementary students may have personal communication devices in their backpacks during the school day. Devices must be TURNED OFF during school hours.

Elementary students may use devices before or after school hours, or in the front office or classroom with the permission of the teacher/administrator.

To clarify a common misperception:

BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) refers to the optional use by secondary students of personal devices (phones or tablets) for teacher-sanctioned instructional activities. There are NO PLANS to introduce BYOD at the elementary level.

More information is available online at www.hcpss.org/byod



Each year HCPSS holds the Let's Go HoCo 5K Race and family 1-mile fun run. This year's race promises to be even bigger and better.

The race will be held Sunday morning, October 16th on Columbia Gateway Drive (new location this year).

Registration is now open at www.hcpss5k.com.

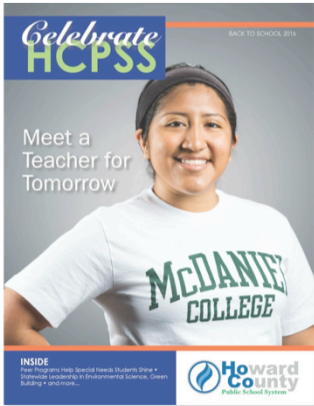
Mark this date on your calendar and encourage your staff and your school families to participate.

The Race supports our system's continued commitment to wellness – for healthy staff, healthy families and healthy kids.

Celebrating HCPSS Students, Staff, and Schools

**Bimonthly magazine
Print and online**

- **Student achievements**
- **Dedicated staff**
- **School activities**



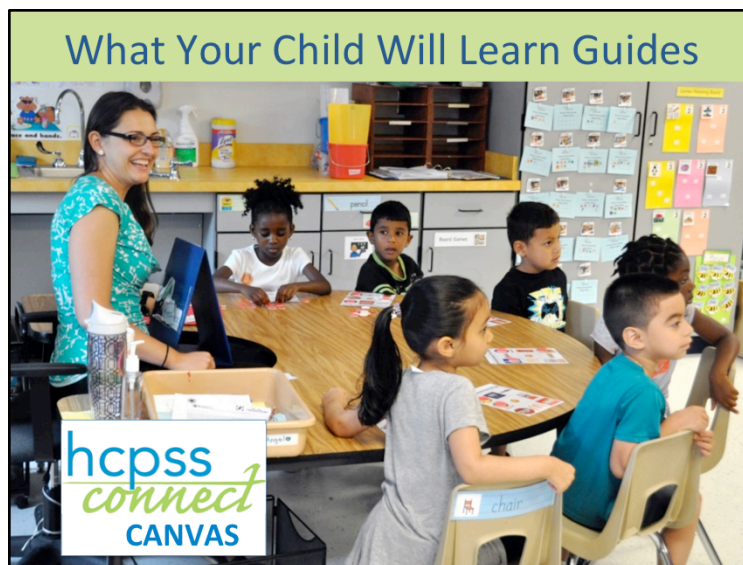
The magazine cover features a woman smiling, wearing a white t-shirt with 'McDANIEL COLLEGE' printed on it. The text on the cover includes 'Celebrate HCPSS', 'Meet a Teacher for Tomorrow', and 'INSIDE: How programs help Special Needs Students Succeed • Cultural immersion in Environmental Science • Green building • and more!'. The Howard County Public School System logo is in the bottom right corner.

celebrate.hcpss.org

Celebrate HCPSS is our new school system magazine. It offers interesting, colorful features about some of the most exciting school projects, inspiring people, and promising programs in HCPSS.

You'll see print issues in our school lobby and in locations around the county. An online version is also available at **celebrate.hcpss.org**, which offers extra photos and additional information.

Let us know about the topics you'd like to see in Celebrate HCPSS!



What Your Child Will Learn guides provide an overview of the instructional program for your child's grade, as well as student goals and expectations. The guides include information to help parents monitor and support their child's progress during the school year.

Individual guides are provided for each grade level. Each grade level guide provides information categorized by curriculum area, e.g., Language Arts, Science, etc.

Find the guides online in Canvas.

The guides are available online only; print versions are no longer distributed. Specific sections may be printed from Canvas.

The guides provide general information about content covered in each curriculum area. Specific student programs may differ, depending on instructional needs.