

WAVE NEWSLETTER

February 5, 2026

Important Dates:

February

- 05 ~ Elementary Schools Dismiss Three Hours Early - Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 06 ~ Elementary Schools Dismiss Three Hours Early - Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 09 ~ Report Cards Available to View, 4pm
- 13 ~ Valentine's Day Celebrations, 3pm
- 16 ~ Schools and Office Closed - President's Day
- 17 ~ Schools and Offices Closed - Lunar New Year
- 20 ~ Author Ada Ari Visits Dayton Oaks
- 27 ~ Fifth Grade Career Day

On Deck With Your Administrators

Dear DOES Families:

As we begin the month of February, we would like to take a moment to recognize and celebrate several important events within our DOES community: Black History Month, Valentine's Day, and the Lunar New Year.

February marks Black History Month, a time to honor and reflect on the contributions and achievements of Black Americans. This year's theme, "A Century of Black History Commemorations," recognizes the 100th anniversary of Black History Month, which was launched by Dr. Carter G. Woodson in 1926 as a week and later evolved into a month. The theme honors a century of studying, preserving, and celebrating Black history, culture, and contributions. We are excited to share that our PTA has secured noted author and storyteller Ada Ari for a series of grade-level assemblies on Friday, February 20, 2026.

Valentine's Day will be celebrated at DOES on Friday, February 13. This day offers an opportunity to emphasize the values of friendship and kindness within our school community. Students and staff will participate in classroom activities and celebrations throughout the afternoon, focusing on spreading kindness and appreciation for one another.

The Lunar New Year will be celebrated from February 17 through February 23, 2026. This year marks the Year of the Horse, symbolizing hard work, bravery, and resilience. Families honor the arrival of spring and the end of winter during this time. It is a wonderful opportunity to highlight Asian traditions, enjoy delicious food, and make wishes for a prosperous new year. We are grateful to the families who have graciously contributed to decorating our hallways and sharing their savory dishes with our DOES staff.

We invite you to join us in recognizing these special events and celebrating the diverse and vibrant community we have at DOES. Thank you for your ongoing partnership as we work together to create a meaningful, inclusive environment for all of our students

Educationally yours,

Ms. Williams-Kennard, Principal
Ms. Lorch, Assistant Principal

Counselor's Corner

Dear Families,

This week is National School Counseling Week! The purpose of this week is to help advocate for the importance of our work as well as inform others of what exactly we do! As the school counselors, Mrs. Hannan and I aim to help make sure every student feels happy, safe, and ready to learn. Our big-picture goal is to support your child's academic journey, social skills, and emotional well-being because we all know that when kids feel good on the inside, they do better on the outside!

Often students call us the "feelings teacher" which we love, but we are much more than that! We visit classrooms regularly to teach lessons on national standards. We cover topics such as self-control, organization strategies, positive friendship skills, and career exploration. We also provide direct and indirect support based on need, such as when a child would benefit from a little extra attention on a "tough day", 1:1 time to focus on a specific skill, or small group instruction.

We are also here for you! We are available to consult with parents and teachers to share strategies that work, and we are happy to help support connections outside of school with local resources, as needed. If you would like to connect with one of the school counselors, you can email them directly.

Mrs. Hannan and I love our job at DOES! Your child's happiness and growth at school are deeply important to us. We are dedicated to building a nurturing environment where all students can thrive. Thank you for your continued support of our role at DOES!

Stephanie Dix (Stephanie_Dix@hcpss.org)
Alyson Hannan (Alyson_Hannan@hcpss.org)

Attention Fifth Grade Families

Middle School Course Selection

Starting now through February 16, please log into Synergy to view your child's course recommendations for middle school as well as help your child choose their fine arts course selection for next year. With the fine arts choice, they will choose their first choice as well as an alternative option. The options include chorus, band, strings, general music, art, theatre. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Alyson Hannan or Stephanie Dix.

Career Day Update

Additionally, we are in the final phases of planning our upcoming Career Day for fifth grade, which will be held in the afternoon on February 27. We are in need of one more volunteer to present in Mr. Ridgley and Ms. Ackerman's classes. If you are interested in presenting about your career, please email Stephanie Dix. Thank you to those volunteers who are available to present! We are looking forward to this fun afternoon of career exploration.

Stephanie Dix
School Counselor
Dayton Oaks Elementary

Author Ada Ari Visits Dayton Oaks for Black History Month

Dayton Oaks is thrilled to welcome children's author, Ada Ari on February 20 as part of our Black History Month programming. Ms. Ari is known for her vibrant retellings of African folktales and her mission to expand diversity and representation in children's literature. Her work draws from the rich storytelling traditions of the African continent, celebrating culture, character, and community through engaging, kid-friendly narratives.

Throughout the day, Ms. Ari will lead grade-level sessions during Related Arts, giving every student the opportunity to experience her interactive storytelling style. Her visits are designed to spark curiosity, build cultural awareness, and help students connect with global perspectives through the power of story.

This special event supports our schoolwide commitment to honoring Black history, uplifting diverse voices, and helping students see themselves—and the wider world—reflected in the books they read.

We look forward to an inspiring day of learning and storytelling with Ada Ari!

Winners of the 2025-2026 Young Authors' Contest

The Howard County Literacy Association has posted the names of all county winners on its [website](#). [Congratulations](#) to all the winners!

The writing contest is open to all students in grades 1 through 12 in public and private schools across Howard County. Participating schools submitted their winning poems and short stories to the county level of the Young Authors' Contest.

The following Dayton Oaks students placed for the Young Author's Contest at the county level:

- **Leamon Cheng** - Grade 4, won 1st place for his short story, *The Shadow that Followed Me*
- **Jasmine Hotrabhavananda** - Grade 5, won 1st place for her poem, "The Forever Lasting Spark of Hope"
- **Allie Moore** - Grade 5, won 2nd place for her short story, *The Golden Journey*

Please join us in congratulating these winners. We'd also like to extend a special thank you to Ms. Hipp for organizing the Young Author's Contest for Dayton Oaks!

Vision and Hearing Screening

The Howard County Health Department will be coming to DOES for our annual vision and hearing screening on Thursday, March 12, 2026. All students in PreK (vision only), kindergarten, first-grade and those new to Maryland Public Schools will be screened. If your child wears glasses, please make sure they bring their glasses to school on screening day. If your child is absent, the rescreening date is March 23, 2026. The health room is in need of volunteers for screenings between 8:30 am and 12:30 p.m. If you are available to volunteer, or if you have any questions, please contact our school nurse, Rachel Tulis, at: rachel_tulis@hcpss.org.

[Hearing and Vision Information Letter.pdf](#)

2026 Family Academy Conference

HCPSS families are invited to attend the 2026 Family Academy Conference on Wednesday, March 4, 2026, from 5:30–8:30 pm at Long Reach High School. This free, districtwide event brings families, educators, and community partners together for an evening of learning, connection, and support. Families can enjoy a light dinner, a community resource fair, interactive workshops focused on academic achievement and well-being, and free childcare. Workshops will include topics such as college and career readiness, special education supports, curriculum updates, and hands-on learning strategies for use at home. Interpretation services will be available. For additional information, please contact BSAP Supervisor, Nicole Brown.

Register online:

[English](#)Links to an external site

[Español](#)Links to an external site

[中文](#)Links to an external site

[한국어](#)Links to an external site.

Flyers are available in:

[English](#)Links to an external site

[Español](#)Links to an external site

[中文](#)Links to an external site

[한국어](#)Links to an external site.

PTA NEWSPLASH

To view the latest edition of the PTA NewSplash, please click [HERE](#).

NEWS WORTH REPEATING

Reminders About Handicapped Parking Spaces

As our school days become busier, we want to extend a friendly reminder regarding arrival and dismissal procedures, in particular, the importance of respecting designated handicapped parking spaces.

Handicapped parking spaces are not just about convenience—they are a lifeline for students, staff, and families who need safe and accessible entry to our school.

Even a quick stop in one of these spots can create real challenges. A child with limited mobility may not be able to get out safely, or a community member with a chronic health condition may find it difficult to make it safely to the building.

We know drop-off and pick-up can be hectic, and we truly appreciate everyone's patience during those times. Choosing to leave these spaces available is not only the law, but also a thoughtful way to care for and support one another in our community. *This also means avoiding stopping behind the spaces in a way that blocks them.*

Thank you for helping us keep Dayton Oaks a safe, inclusive, and welcoming place for all. Please also share this reminder with any family members or friends who may be dropping off or picking up students.

Health Checks

As the winter season gets underway and many activities move indoors, we often experience an increase in the spread of the flu, colds, COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

All families, students, staff and visitors should conduct daily health checks prior to entering any HCPSS building and/or school bus, and are reminded to ***stay home if they are experiencing symptom(s) associated with any communicable disease.***

Infection control prevents or stops the spread of infections, and may include standard precaution methods. [Learn more about HCPSS protocols](#), how these conditions are managed at school, and how they can be handled at home. Additional [information on keeping students healthy](#) is available online.

Health Room Request

The health room is seeking donations of small water bottles, individual packages of Goldfish crackers, and Clorox wipes.

Change of Address

Please note that any change of residency must be reported through the Family File within 10 school days of the move. Current residency documentation must be provided to the school each time residency changes. Please reach out to the front office team with questions or if you need assistance with updating your Family File.

Rodent Control in Schools

Food is one of the main reasons rodents try to get inside buildings. As such, HCPSS is asking families to [take several steps](#) to help decrease the likelihood of rodent infestations. Thanks for your help to ensure our schools are safe and healthy.

2025 - 2026 School Supply List

Click [HERE](#) to view the school supply list for the 25-26 school year.

Student Personal Device Policy

This summer, the Board of Education agreed to continue with the policy that implements strict limitations on the personal use of devices by students during the student day. Per the policy, students may be in possession of personal devices, but they must be “away and silenced,” meaning devices are not able to be seen by either the student or staff member and are set to make no noise. Additionally, devices may not be a distraction. Smart watches will be permitted to be worn to check time but may not be a distraction. More information about the [policy](#) may be found on the HCPSS website.

Reminders About Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

To ensure a smooth and safe arrival and dismissal for our students, please read the information below.

SCHOOL HOURS: 9:15 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

ARRIVAL TIMES:

- 9:00 a.m. First bell rings/students may enter the building.
- 9:10 a.m. Second/late bell rings/students should be in the classroom.

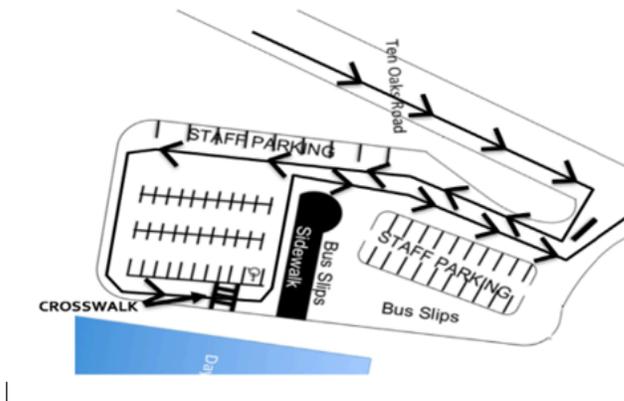
Students should not be dropped off or let out of your vehicle until 9:00 a.m. Supervision is not available for students before this time. Before and after care is available through Howard County Parks and Recreation as well as other before and after school providers in the community.

All children who are late must be accompanied by a parent and be signed into school in the front office.

DISMISSAL TIMES: Dismissal begins at 3:45 pm.

If you have to make a change to your student's dismissal, please send a note and/or email to their teacher, and notify the front office. If you have to make a change during the day, after your student has arrived at school, please email your child's teacher AND email the front office staff at: doesfrontoffice@hcpss.org. **No students will be released from the front office for early dismissal after 3:30pm.** This will help to ensure the safety of our students and cut down on confusion at the end of the day as afternoon dismissal begins.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures and Expectations: Please see the visual below for the flow of our car loop. Below the visual are the expectations and instructions for making arrival and dismissal of your student(s) as efficient and safe as possible.



Reminders for arrival and dismissal:

Use the car loop to drop off students. When you enter the parking lot, you must make the full loop around.

- There is NO PASSING in the carpool loop, unless directed by a DOES staff member.
- Never leave a car unattended in the carpool loop/line.
- Pull up as far as possible (to the peninsula sidewalk) before letting your child exit the vehicle. Please make sure there are no spaces between cars.
- Children will be let out of the passenger side of the vehicle only. Staff will assist children with getting in and out of the car. Parents should NOT get out of the car.
- Do not turn left to enter the bus loop area between 8:45 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. or between 3:15 p.m. and 3:45 p.m.
- It is extremely unsafe to walk behind or between buses in the bus loop. Take the extra minute in line to ensure everyone's safety.
- Parents should avoid parking and walking in unless they have an appointment within the building. The car loop area is safer with less pedestrian traffic and fewer cars moving

within the parking lot.

- If you need to park, you must park in the larger lot by the carpool loop. This is the only area with a crosswalk to ensure safety when walking toward the building.
- The parking spots parallel to Ten Oaks Road are designated as Staff Parking during arrival and dismissal. Entering or exiting your vehicle is unsafe from these parking spaces while traffic from the car loop is flowing.
- All traffic must flow in one direction.
- If you are leaving a parking spot during arrival or dismissal, follow the directions of school staff. You may need to wait for cars to continue through the car loop before you are directed to pull out of the lot. The priority is to keep the car loop flowing.
- Please be courteous and respectful to both staff and other families.

Health Room Reminders

Any medications required during school hours including prescription, “over-the-counter” (OTC) and homeopathic/herbal medications require a medication order signed by an approved health care provider and are subject to the HCPSS medication policy and procedure.

Medication form

- Have a student with allergies? Learn more about [ordering an epipen and our allergic reaction protocols](#).

School health room staff administer medications, store medications in the school’s health room and keep records of when medications are taken by the student.

Approved Non-Medications:

The items below are not considered medications. Students may bring the items to school without a medical prescription. Health Services requests that a parent/guardian note accompany the item to serve as permission to bring to school.

- Sunscreen
- Chapstick
- Hand lotion
- Non-medicated cough drops
- Saline contact solution

Sunscreen must be supplied by an individual student and is not to be shared with other students due to potential allergens and skin reactions.

Please contact the health room at 410 313-1575 if you have any questions.

Immunization Clinics:

The Howard County Health Department is hosting clinics for students that are in need of immunizations for the start of the school year.

[Childhood Immunization | Howard County \(howardcountymd.gov\)](https://www.howardcountymd.gov/childhood-immunization)

Attendance/Reporting Student Absences

Students who are sick and need to stay home will be given an excused absence providing a note from the parent/guardian is submitted to the school after the student’s return, indicating the date and reason for tardiness or absence from a regular school session. A doctor’s note is required in cases of long-term absence or excessive absenteeism due to illness. Please email

doesabsence@hcpss.org to report your child's absence.

If a student needs to stay home for a prolonged period due to illness, the student or a parent/guardian can reach out to their teacher(s) for resources students can use at home to continue learning once they feel well enough. Additional [information on student absences](#) can be found online.

For families requesting local discretionary absences, please complete a [Local Discretionary Absence Request Form](#) and submit it to the front office at least one week in advance.

Community News

Please visit the HCPSS website [Community News and Programs site](#) for upcoming events and programs sponsored by non-profit organizations.