

WAVE NEWSLETTER

March 19, 2026

Important Dates:

March

- 20 ~ Schools Closed for Students - Professional Work Day
- 23 ~ Vision and Hearing Rescreening
- 30 - 31 ~ Schools Closed - Spring Break

April

- 01 - 03 ~ Schools Closed - Spring Break
- 06 ~ Schools Open for Full Day - **NEW**
- 08 ~ PTA Meeting; 7pm
- 10 ~ Family BINGO Night; River Hill High School; 6-8pm
- 15 ~ Three-Hour Early Dismissal - Professional Work Day - **NEW**
- 16 ~ Belonging Night; 6-8pm
- 24 ~ Second Grade Field Trip to Maryland Science Center
- 25 ~ Culture Festival; 2:00 - 4:30 pm

On Deck With Your Administrators

Dear Dayton Oaks Families:

There are so many wonderful things happening at Dayton Oaks, and we are excited to share a few highlights with our community.

We would like to extend our congratulations to Jie Ren, who proudly represented Dayton Oaks at the Howard County Library Spelling Bee held on Saturday, March 14, 2026, at Hammond High School. Jie advanced to Round 6, successfully competing against students from across Howard County. We are incredibly proud of his perseverance and poise. Special thanks to Ms. Starr, who organized this year's school-based Spelling Bee, and to Ms. Graham, our Media Specialist, for supporting Jie during this memorable experience.

We are also deeply grateful for the overwhelming support of our March Madness Read-A-Thon Fundraiser. Participation exceeded our expectations, and we truly appreciate the enthusiasm shown by our students and families. Funds raised will directly benefit our school community by supporting the purchase of high-quality instructional materials for students, professional learning resources for staff, and select improvements within and around our building.

Prizes were delivered today and will be distributed to students on Monday, March 23, 2026. Families will be contacted directly to arrange pickup of any larger items that cannot be transported home on the bus.

As we approach the final week before Spring Break, we wish all of our students, staff, and families a restful and rejuvenating break. This time provides an important opportunity to recharge before we begin the final stretch of the school year.

Thank you, as always, for your continued partnership and support.

Educationally yours,

Ms. Williams-Kennard, Principal

Ms. Lorch, Assistant Principal

Counselor's Corner

Dear families,

As we approach Spring Break, we look forward to a well-deserved change of pace for our students who have been working so hard in Quarter 3. Whether your family is traveling or staying home for break, we encourage a flexible but predictable rhythm to balance the excitement of break with the comfort of a familiar routine. Keeping consistent bed and wake-up times, for example, can help keep the hours in between for creativity, exploration, and recharge! Below are some ideas to help create a plan for this downtime:

- Practice a new skill such as typing, a craft, or a physical skill
- Research a favorite topic to present to a family member
- Create a fort that is great for creative play or comfy reading
- Build an obstacle course for a fun physical challenge
- Use sidewalk chalk to transform your driveway into a vibrant community gallery
- Design a scavenger hunt with clues that encourage problem-solving
- Start a family book club and discuss your favorite details over dinner
- Reorganize a space at home

By prioritizing a reset, our students will return to school after break with the mental and emotional energy needed to finish the school year strong. Wishing all of our families a safe, restorative, and joyful Spring Break.

Stephanie Dix and Alyson Hannan

Application Open for HCPSS Prekindergarten

The application is open for HCPSS' full-day prekindergarten program for the 2026-2027 school year. Families of children who turn 4 on or before September 1, 2026, are eligible to apply.

[Additional information](#), including a link to the application, is available online.

A Musical Note from Ms. Sutton

On Saturday, March 14, 2026, the Howard County Honors Orchestra held their yearly concert at Marriott's Ridge High School. This orchestra consists of two students from every elementary school in Howard County who were nominated by their orchestra teachers based on not only their musicianship, but more importantly on their work ethic, leadership, and dedication to orchestra. The two students that were nominated and represented Dayton Oaks Elementary School are two fifth graders, Rory McArdle and Lillian Sessa. Congratulations to both of them on an amazing performance last Saturday. Thank you for representing Dayton Oaks so well. Great job Lillian and Rory!

Third Annual Belonging Night

The DOES Belonging Group is excited to announce the third annual Belonging Night, being held at Dayton Oaks Elementary School on Thursday, April 16th from 6:00-8:00pm! This is an evening of fun games and activities where families are encouraged to mix and mingle while getting to know each other! Please join us for this meaningful event! More details to come!

Vision and Hearing Rescreening

Our annual vision and hearing screening was on March 12, 2026. All students in PreK (vision only), kindergarten, first-grade and those new to Maryland Public Schools were screened. If your child was absent, the rescreening date is Monday, March 23, 2026. If your child wears glasses, please make sure they bring their glasses with them.

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

Spring 2026 After-School Classes

Attached is the Howard County Recreation & Parks - Spring 2026 Before & After School Classes flier, which markets our Spring 2026 Before & After school classes for students at Dayton Oaks. These classes provide fun, structured, educational, and enriching activities for students on site at Dayton Oaks, benefitting both the child(ren) and parents!

[Spring 2026 Before and After-School Classes](#)

2026 Children's Discovery Fair

April 11th; 10am - 1pm

Howard County Office of Children and Families

East Columbia 50+ Center 6610 Cradlerock Way, Columbia, MD

[2026 Children's Discovery Fair: Little Learners, Big Discoveries Tickets](#) | [Eventbrite](#)

Free Behavioral Health Resource Fair

April 25th; 10am - 1pm

Long Reach Village Center 8775 Cloudless Court, Columbia, MD

[Behavioral Health Resource Fair Flier 4-10-2025](#)

PTA NEWSPLASH

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

NEWS WORTH REPEATING

Important School Calendar Updates

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) 2025-2026 school year calendar included three inclement weather makeup days, June 16–18. As of Feb. 26, HCPSS has used five inclement weather days and four late openings, resulting in high schools being two hours short of what is required in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR).

At its February 26 meeting, the Howard County [Board of Education approved calendar adjustments](#) to ensure the school system meets the State's required days and hours, including:

- Tuesday, March 3: Scheduled as an early dismissal, becomes a full day for students.

- Monday, April 6 (Easter Monday): Scheduled as schools/offices closed, becomes a full day for students. The State Board of Education granted HCPSS a waiver to open school that day.
- Wednesday, April 15: Scheduled to be closed for students and designated as a staff professional learning and work day, becomes a half-day for students with the standard 3-hour early dismissal and half work day for staff.
- Thursday, May 14: Scheduled as an early dismissal, becomes a full day for students.
- Tuesday, June 16–Thursday, June 18: Scheduled as inclement weather makeup days included in the 2025-2026 school year calendar, become half days for students.

Barring any additional inclement weather days, the last day of school will be Thursday, June 18, 2026. Updates to the June calendar include the following:

- Thursday, June 11–Monday, June 15: Scheduled as early dismissals, become full school days
- Monday, June 15: Last day for half day pre-K / RECC .
- Tuesday, June 16–Thursday, June 18 (last day of school): Schools dismiss three hours early with half work days for staff. June 16 will be designated for staff articulation.

Any future disruptions to the calendar due to inclement weather will require additional solutions to be communicated if/when needed.

An updated HCPSS online calendar is available now at www.hcpss.org/calendar.

2026-2027 Kindergarten Registration Kickoff

Kindergarten registration for families of children who will be 5 years old by September 1, 2026, kicked off Monday, March 2. Parents/guardians can begin the [enrollment process](#) online, after which your child’s school will contact you to complete the registration process. Current HCPSS prekindergarten students do not need to be re-registered for kindergarten because they are already enrolled as an HCPSS student.

A Musical Note from Ms. Sutton

Each month, Ms. Sutton selects one outstanding student from each of her 15 orchestra classes to be recognized as **Musician of the Month**. These students consistently demonstrate dedication to their instrument by practicing regularly and achieving high scores on their playing and performance assessments. These important habits contribute greatly to their musical growth and success.

The **Musician of the Month** award certificates are proudly displayed on the bulletin board outside of Ms. Sutton’s room. Being selected is a true honor, and students are especially excited to receive a special *musical hole punch* on their certificate. These punches can be collected and redeemed for prizes at **Sutton’s Trading Post** at Dayton Oaks.

[Congratulations](#) to these March Musicians of the Month:

Aubrey Geddin, violin
 Nora Zhang, violin
 Christina Allen, violin
 Rayyan Haroon, viola
 Emma Garmew, cello

Hannah Okunade, bass
Mimo Perez-Solomon, cello
Ava Allen, violin
Zadie Johnson, violin
Luna By violin
Rooney Gilman, violin
Sameer Gaddam, violin
Noah Yoo, viola
Evelyn Misner, viola
Nimi Ayankoya, cello

Congratulations again to these amazing orchestra musicians of the month for March 2026!

March Madness for National Reading Month

March is National Reading Month, and this year Dayton Oaks will be having a little friendly competition in the world of books! Inspired by NCAA March Madness, get ready for an imaginative tournament where books go head-to-head in a fun, bracket-style battle! This exciting event brings our community together to celebrate reading and creativity. Picture a lively basketball court where books compete for the championship title. Readers cheer for their favorites, turning reading into an unforgettable literary showdown!

Each week in homeroom classes, students will get to read the two books featured in that week's matchup. They will get to cast their vote on their favorite book of the week and their teacher will record their votes. Each Friday during the month of March, the winning book of the week will be announced on the Friday morning announcements. At the end of the month, the overall winning book will be crowned!

The books we will be reading, by week, [can be found here](#). Feel free to also read them at home and have your child count this as reading towards their read-a-thon hours!

Happy Reading Month!
Mrs. Hipp & The DOES Media Team

Save the Date for the DOES Student Showcase

SAVE THE DATE - The Dayton Oaks Student Showcase, scheduled for May 21, 2026, from 6:30-8pm, is an open house for family and community that spotlights learning at Dayton Oaks Elementary. We will be rolling out the red carpet to view the amazing work from all our star students in RECC to 5th grade! Additionally, we invite students to participate in the showcase by creating a STEAM project. Just follow the directions for creating a STEAM Project in the [packet](#). We hope to see you at our red carpet event!

River Hill Boosters Summer Camps

The River Hill High School Boosters are sponsoring summer camps at River Hill High School. The camps are designed to help young athletes improve their fundamental athletic skills. Weekly camps begin on June 8th. Over thirty different camps are offered this summer, including football, tennis, soccer, baseball, softball, lacrosse, field hockey, volleyball, basketball, cheerleading, weight training, cross country, "Hawks" Sports camp, and dance. We also offer an Art camp, Paper Magic book camps, and Video Production camps. Camp schedule and registration can be found at www.riverhill.org.

Biz Kidz Academy Celebrate Your Talents! Competition

This engaging opportunity invites students ages 8–14 to submit a short essay or video showcasing a creative talent or business idea, or to participate as vendor exhibitors to pitch and sell their products and services. Participants can win prizes such as laptops, gift cards, art supplies, and trophies; entries and registrations are due by March 31, with an awards ceremony on April 25. See [this flyer](#) [Links to an external site.](#) for details.

Expanded Online Tutoring Help

Brainfuse HelpNow is now available 24/7 for all library users, expanding access beyond the previous 2 p.m. – midnight live tutoring hours. This means students and caregivers can connect with live online tutoring and academic support anytime that fits their schedule. Brainfuse HelpNow is available on the [HCLS website](#), and video and written instructions on how to use the resource are available [here](#). First-time users will need to create a username and password.

Join the Western Howard County Warhawks Football Program

Calling all young athletes ready to learn, grow, and compete! The Western Howard County Warhawks football program provides a fun, safe, and supportive environment where players of all experience levels can develop their skills and confidence. Our dedicated coaches focus on fundamentals, teamwork, sportsmanship, and leadership—both on and off the field.

Whether your child is new to football or looking to build on their experience, the Warhawks offer an inclusive program that emphasizes player development, physical fitness, and a true love for the game. Most importantly, we pride ourselves on building a strong football family where athletes make lasting friendships and unforgettable

See Howard County Rec and Parks Activity Guide or www.gowarhawks.com for registration and cost. Registration is now open.

Clarksville Catholic Youth Camp

We are excited to offer a Maryland-licensed, faith-based summer program serving children ages 4–12 from June 22 through August 14. Our goal remains to provide a safe, engaging, and community-centered environment where children can grow in confidence, friendship, and joy.

Website: <https://stlouisparish.org/camp>

Registration Link: <https://fs11.formsite.com/y13kUO/igycmelq19/index>

DISCOVER YOUR SUMMER ADVENTURE



JOIN US FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE AT CLARKSVILLE CATHOLIC YOUTH CAMP!
MARYLAND LICENSED SUMMER CAMP LOCATED IN CLARKSVILLE MD



CREATIVITY

Explore your artistic side through engaging crafts and projects every week! Join artsy craftsy camp, building camp, lego camp and more.



SPORTS

Enjoy fun and exciting sports activities designed for all skill levels and ages Join basketball camp, soccer camp, flag football camp, and more.



ADVENTURE

Join us for theatrical fun with opportunities for performance and expression. Join broadcasting camp, photography camp, combat archery camp, and more.

REGISTER NOW

JUNE 22 - AUGUST 14

FOR AGES 4-12

FLEXIBLE HOURS FROM 7:30AM - 5:30PM



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.

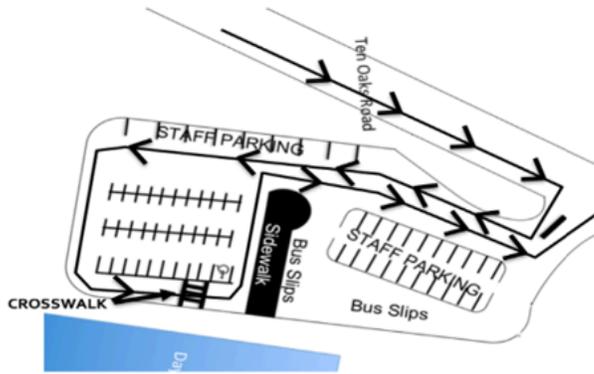
Students should not be dropped off or let out of your vehicle until 9:00 a.m. Supervision is not available for students before this time. Before and after care is available through Howard County Parks and Recreation as well as other before and after school providers in the community.

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 \(howardcountymd.gov\)](#)

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.