



Eagle Express: *September 2, 2023*

VETERANS ELEMENTARY NEWSLETTER

Calendar Events:

- Mon. Sept. 4th
 - Mon. Sept 11th
 - Mon. Sept. 11th
 - Tues. Sept. 12th
 - Wed. Sept. 13th
 - Wed. Sept. 13th
 - Fri. Sept 15th
 - Thurs. Sept 21st.
 - Thurs. Sept 21st
 - Mon. Sept 25th
- Labor Day - Schools and Offices Closed**
ESOL Families @ 6:00pm
Back to School Night Kindergarten & First Grade @ 7:00pm
Back to School Night Third Grade & Fourth Grade @ 7:00pm
Gifted & Talented Presentation @ 6:00pm
Back to School Night Second Grade & Fifth Grade @ 7:00pm
School and Offices Closed
Standard Based Instruction and Reporting Night @ 6:00 pm
PTA Back to School Social @ 6:30pm
School and Offices Closed

Click [here](#) for the HCPSS Academic calendar and Related Arts color days

Dear Veterans Families,

We had a fantastic first week of school! Our students have done a great job settling into their new classroom and routines. Students are happy and enthusiastic to see their friends and teachers as they are settling into the routine of their new classrooms. This week students and teachers worked together to create a positive and inclusive classroom environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

We want to express our gratitude to parents, grandparents, and community members for their patience with transportation and the carloop. We will continue to work in partnership with HCPSS transportation to address any concerns. This newsletter includes updates on a few HCPSS policies. When you have time, please review the policies and contact us if you have questions.

All HCPSS schools are closed on Monday in observance of Labor Day. We hope you have a great weekend! Thanks again for your patience and support.

Sincerely,

Alexcia Redd, Keri Golibart and Brian Holcomb-McMahon

Announcements

Arrival & Dismissal

Student arrival is from 9:00am- 9:15am. Students should not be dropped off or left unattended before 9:00 am. Parent/Guardian is responsible for their child's supervision until the VES school doors open at 9:00am in the morning. If your child has a change in their dismissal plans, please provide VES office staff AND the classroom teacher with this information by sending us an email to vestransportation@hcpss.org. We ask that you make your request no later than 2:00 pm. We will not honor a change in dismissal plans without parental approval. Please indicate the student's name, the date of the transportation change and the details of the transportation change in the email. (ie. will be a car rider instead of bus rider) Early dismissals require you to sign your child/ren out by scanning the QR Code located on the table and near the door bell. Complete the Google Document and be ready to present your ID/License to the secretary. Early dismissals should be requested prior to 3:15pm.

- Please bring your cell phone to scan the QR code.
- **Please be prepared to present your Photo ID.**
- Please plan accordingly. Students will be dismissed from class upon their parents' arrival and after they have signed the student out from the front office. We cannot have the student dismissed ahead of parent arrival.

Student Absences

Send absent notes to vesabsence@hcpss.org including the child's full name, teacher name and explaining why your child will or was absent. If your child is ill for 5 days or more, you must provide a doctor's note.

Testing

The window for the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) is open through October 10th. This is an observational and assessment tool that provides teachers with information about student readiness for kindergarten. After the assessment window closes, reports will be sent home to families.

Our first graders will be taking their Fall Measures of Academic Program (MAP) assessment the week of September 18th-23rd. Grades 2-5 will be taking their MAP assessments between September 26 and October 19th.

Lunch with your child

You must complete the [Confidentiality Training Course](#) and [Child Abuse and Neglect Training](#). Return the 2 signed certificates to school. Once completed, sign-up to have lunch with your child using the [Reservation Form](#). No siblings are allowed.

Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment and Intimidation

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all students. Preventing bullying is an important part of this goal. [HCPSS Policy 9460](#) states that bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation are prohibited in HCPSS. The BCHI Reporting Form should be used to report all alleged incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and intimidation that occur at school or have a connection back to the school setting that create a risk of harm to other students while they are at school, or interfere with the educational environment. An [online version](#) is available and can easily and confidentially be used by students, staff, and family members. Hard copies of this form are available in the main office, staff workroom, school counseling office, media center, and health services office. If you believe that a student has been bullied, please complete and submit this form as soon as possible.

Once the form is submitted, school administrators will ensure the parent/guardian of both the alleged target and alleged offender are aware of the report and will begin an investigation within two school days of receiving the report. Parents/guardians can expect a school administrator to reach out to them during the investigation. Once the investigation is

completed, parents/guardians will be provided written notice of the outcome of the investigation within fifteen days of receiving the complaint, excluding extenuating circumstances.

I want to take a moment to specifically lift up cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is bullying using electronic media like computers, cell phones, and game systems. Our digital interconnectedness makes bullying different and more damaging than it's ever been before. It allows hatred and publicly humiliating gossip or photos to be instantly far-reaching and inescapable as electronic media is everywhere. It can NOT simply be ignored. In October 2013, the State of Maryland enacted Grace's Law, making misuse of interactive computer services a criminal offense. Its purpose is to prohibit anyone from using electronic media (computers, tablets, phones, etc.) to maliciously engage in conduct that inflicts serious emotional distress on a minor and/or places that minor in reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury. A person who is found guilty of violating this law is subject to imprisonment and/or fines. While this will be reviewed with students at school, we are asking you to do the same at home. Thank you for your partnership.

More information can be found on the [HCPSS Stop Bullying website](#). If you have any questions regarding this policy or its implementation, please contact a school administrator.

HCPSS Code of Conduct

The HCPSS Student Code of Conduct provides a framework to support behavioral goals and disciplinary policies. All students are expected to be aware of and abide by this Student Code of Conduct. They are designed to foster a sense of belonging and affirm positive behaviors. At Veterans, we implement programs such as social-emotional learning, Positive Behaviors Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and restorative conversations to help teach and reinforce school-appropriate behaviors and build community amongst our students and staff. We encourage you to read the Student Code of Conduct carefully and discuss the information with your children. [Click here](#) to learn more about the HCPSS Student Code of Conduct.

FRIENDLY REMINDERS

Phone Calls to school...

When calling the school for a missed call, please check your voice message first before calling the school regarding the missed call.

Family File

We have nearly 300 families that have not completed the [Family File](#). You must complete the family file for each of your children. Parents who have forgotten their login credentials for Family File may click the "[Forgot Password](#)" link on the sign-in page. If you need additional assistance, please call Veterans Elementary at 410-313-1700.

Back To School Nights

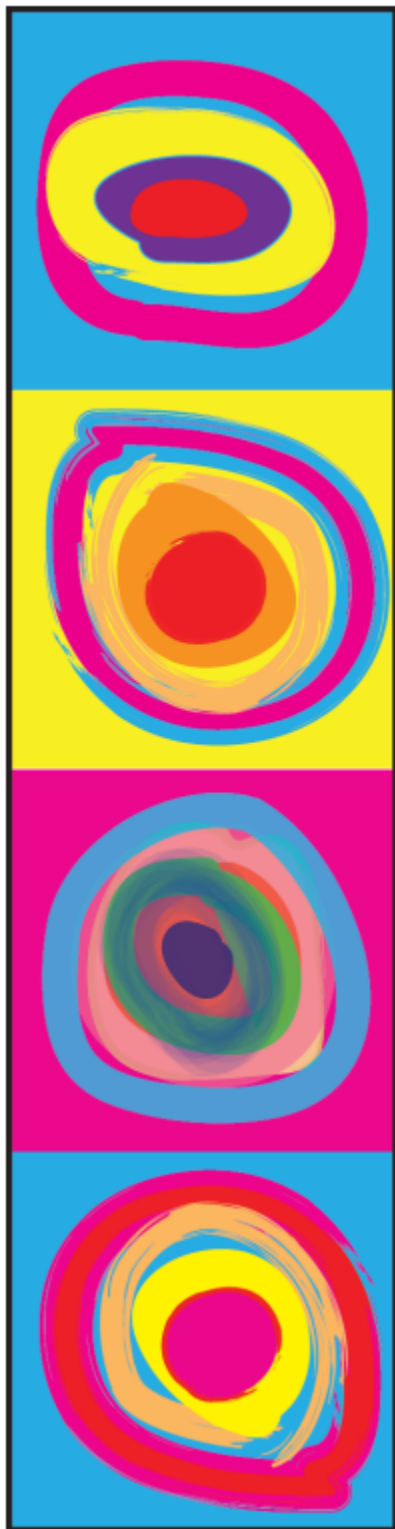
Our Back to School Nights offer our families the opportunity to hear about all aspects of the new school year from our administrative team, our PTA, and our staff. Please note that our current school families are the intended audience for Back to School Night presentations.

- Mon. Sept. 11th Back to School Night Kindergarten & First Grade @ 7:00pm
- Tues. Sept. 12th Back to School Night Third Grade & Fourth Grade @ 7:00pm
- Wed. Sept. 13th Back to School Night Second Grade & Fifth Grade @ 7:00pm

Volunteer Opportunities

We are excited to invite volunteers back into the building! All [volunteers must complete a Confidentiality Training Course](#) about protecting the privacy of our students, staff, and schools, and the [Child Abuse and Neglect Training](#) about reporting any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Howard County Department of Social Services. **The two online trainings MUST be completed by anyone who wants to volunteer in the building/classroom and be a chaperone on field trips. The Confidentiality Agreement and the Abuse Training Certificate must be signed and returned to the School Office.**

BEFORE SCHOOL PROGRAM



Veterans Elementary School
presents
Fall 2023

Art Adventures-Express Yourself! (K-5th Grades)

This session is all about exploring and celebrating your unique personality through art. Discuss superpowers, symbols, words, and emotions and create one-of-a-kind artwork! Exploring different mediums and techniques is part of the fun of art! Unlock your creativity as we create a new piece of art each week!

This 8-week session will be an art adventure your child will love! Space is limited, so register today!!

Monday's from 8:10 - 9:10 am
Oct 2, 16, 23, 30th, Nov. 6, 13, 20, 27th;

No Class on : 10/9

8 classes for \$145 +\$16 materials fee
(due the first day of class)

Register at:

www.howardcountymd.gov/rap

For more information, please contact
us at:

Marianne Daley -Educational Director
410-381-5566 or
mdaley@abrakadoodle.com
www.abrakadoodle.com

COMMUNITY RESOURCES



NAMI Basics is a FREE education program for parents and other caregivers of children and adolescents living with mental illness that provides resources and practical insights for families. The NAMI Basics course is taught by trained parents who have lived similar experiences with their own children.

It is not necessary that the child has a specific diagnosis. Caregivers who suspect their child is experiencing symptoms of mental illness can also benefit from the course as they begin to navigate the evaluation and treatment process.

Tuesdays from 7-9:30pm
September 19th to October 24th
at the NAMI HC Office (and via Zoom)
9650 Santiago Rd, Suite 1, Columbia, MD 20145

If these dates/times do not work for you, there is also an OnDemand version of the Basics class available at basics.nami.org.

What the course covers

- An introduction to the basics of mental illness, including the biology of mental illness, the challenges of getting an accurate diagnosis, and the latest medical research and advancements in treatment.
- An overview of treatment options for your child.
- Strategies to cope with the impact of a child's illness on the rest of the family, including caring for the caregivers.
- Tools for success e.g., effective communication and problem solving skills, record keeping, and navigating critical support systems (school, mental health care, etc.)

If interested, please contact Kristen Moore at kmoore.namihc@gmail.com

News Worth Repeating

New Student Meals & Payments

New for the 2023-2024 school year, HCPSS no longer will use Nutrislice for school menus or MySchoolBucks for payment. Instead, we have a [new parent site](#) for all things food and nutrition. LINQ Connect is a secure, online portal that allows families to make online payments to their child's meal account, monitor their child's account, schedule automatic recurring payments, set up low balance alerts, submit a Free and Reduced Meals program application, and more.

Please note: MySchoolBucks meal balances were automatically transferred to LINQ Connect. If your child had a balance at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, when you add your child to your profile, that meal balance will be displayed.

To request a refund of meal balances at any time, [complete this brief online form](#).

Free and Reduced Meals - check your eligibility today!

Students whose families do not qualify for free or reduced lunch will be required to pay the [daily meal price](#). Many HCPSS families are eligible to participate in the Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARMS) program, which provides children with a wide range of benefits including free or discounted college tuition, testing and application fees, academic and athletic program fees and many others in addition to free or discounted meals. Families are urged to check their eligibility and complete a FARMS application as soon as possible. Families must submit a new application every school year. [Details on the Free and Reduced Meals program](#), including a link to apply, are available online.

Health Services

[Health Services](#) information can be found online and will be continually updated. All families, students, staff and visitors should conduct daily health checks prior to entering any HCPSS building and/or school bus. [Details, including infection control protocols for communicable diseases like COVID-19](#), are available online.

Please note that health and safety protocols are subject to change, pending guidance and recommendations from federal, state and local health officials, among other sources.

Opening School Information

The first day of school is **Monday, August 28th**.

Bell Schedule:

- Doors open at 9:00 am
- Late bell at 9:15 am
- Instruction starts at 9:15 am
- Dismissal begins at 3:45 pm

Click [here](#) for the HCPSS Academic calendar and Related Arts color days

Please work to ensure that your child arrives at school on time. A tardy student must be walked in and signed in by an adult in the front office. If you are dropping your child off at school, consider the car loop traffic as you make your plans for arrival. Students should not be dropped off or let out of your vehicle until 9:00 AM. 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.

Arrival and Dismissal

It is important that our students learn the arrival and dismissal procedures, therefore, we highly encourage you to allow your child to arrive and be dismissed from school the same way everyday. There will be staff members outside and inside the building greeting students and helping them to their classrooms. **For everyone's safety, please do not walk your child into the building unless you have an appointment with a staff member.**

Car riders

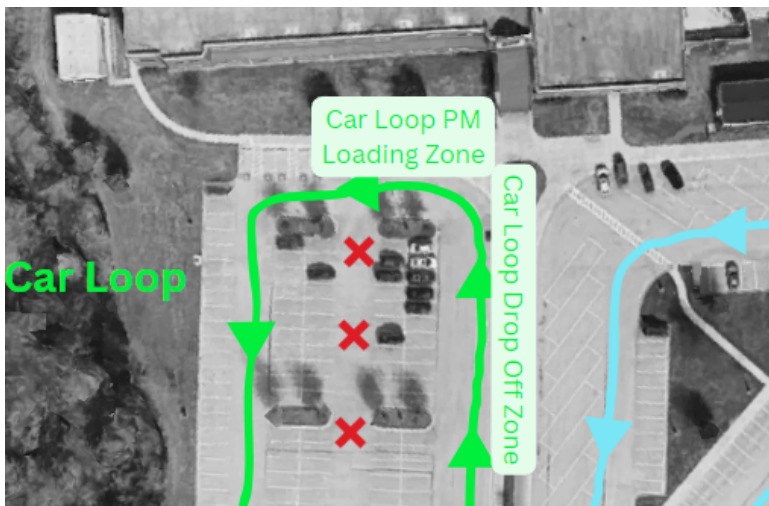
We have **new** carloop procedures to share with you. All cars entering the car loop lane are expected to follow the same procedures that are outlined below.

We now have white STOP lines painted on the ground by the bus and car loop area. A staff member will be at the corner of this area. Please adhere to the staff member's directions for everyone's safety and easy flow of traffic. This year the center aisle in the parking lot will be closed off in order to create a better flow of traffic. Parents should not park in the carloop line or walk their child through moving traffic. Please insist that your child exits and enters your car on **the passenger side only** so that they never cross between cars. There are staff members outside to assist students as needed. Everyone must act with care and patience. Please follow the directions of the staff and kindly abide by our safety practices. Thank you for your support!

Drop off & Pick-up Rules and Courtesies

It is crucial that parents dropping off/picking up students **adhere to the following rules** in order to maintain the highest level of safety for the students and courtesy to those behind you:

1. When approaching the carloop, please stay in a single lane (the right lane) until you reach the carloop drop off area. Please do not block the crosswalk.
2. Students should exit the vehicle on the passenger side. If a student needs to exit on the driver's side, please ask a staff member for assistance. Please stay in your vehicle.
3. Please avoid parking and walking your child to the door unless you have an appointment. The carloop is safer with less pedestrian traffic.
4. Mind the gaps. Pull all the way to the end of the loop before loading, out of courtesy to those behind you.
5. Remember to stay in your vehicle and ask a staff member if you need help with your child.
6. ALWAYS pay attention to what's happening around you and your car!



If you decide to park your car, please park in a parking space. For everyone's safety, please refrain from double parking or blocking the lane in the parking lot. Also, please avoid walking between cars in the carloop.

Safety and courtesy will be maximized **if all drivers** follow these rules. Staff on duty are happy to help your student(s) exit or enter the car.

Bus riders

We highly recommend all students that are eligible for bus transportation ride the bus to and from school in order to reduce traffic in the car loop. Please use the [bus locator](#) to determine the specifics on bus stop locations and pick up times for the 2023-2024 school year. The bus locator link will be available in mid-August 2023.

Parent Teachers Association (PTA)

Our PTA is focused on advocacy for students and staff as well as fostering a sense of community for all of our families. We welcome your participation! Please see the VES PTA page on our website for more information and how to volunteer! You can also follow VES PTA on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/PTAatVES>

Click [here](#) for the HCPSS Academic calendar and Related Arts color days

Temporary Employee Positions Available

We are looking for caring and compassionate individuals to assist students with disabilities who require direct adult supervision throughout the school day. The position works under the daily supervision of the school administration and under the direction of a special education teacher and/or a classroom teacher. Some experience working with children is preferred. Below are details regarding the position.

- Temporary Employee (TE) positions are with Social Service Consultants, Ltd.
- Compensation is \$15.00 per hour
- The hours are 9:15 AM – 3:45 PM Monday-Friday

To apply, please email Robert Tencher at Rtencher@gmail.com to request an application packet. Please specify that you are interested in working at Veterans Elementary School. Contact Keri Golibart at Keri_Golibart@hcpss.org when you have completed all parts of the application.