

Happy New Year! We're excited to have everyone back after a restful winter break. As we move through the remainder of Quarter 2, we encourage our students to stay focused, give their best effort, and finish the quarter proud of their hard work. Thank you for your continued partnership and support. We're grateful to be part of your child's learning journey and look forward to the months ahead.

Important Dates

January 13 - School Picture Retakes/Make-Ups

January 13 - Patapsco Rising 6th Grade [Parent Night](#)

January 19 - Schools and Offices Closed

January 21 - Hearing and Vision Screening (Grade 8 only)

January 22 - Schools Close 3 Hours Early

January 23 - Middle and High Schools Only Close 3 Hours Early

January 26 - Schools Closed for Students

School Picture Make-Ups and Retakes

On January 13, Lifetouch Photography will be at Patapsco for School Picture Make-Ups and Retakes. Any students who did not have their picture taken on our original picture day in October will have pictures taken. Also, any students who would like to have their pictures retaken may bring their picture packet from October to turn in and have a new picture taken.

Hearing and Vision Screening

Parents/Guardians:

The Howard County Health Department and HCPSS School Health Services support your student's academic success by providing vision and hearing screenings at your child's school. These screenings are required by Maryland State Law.

Screenings are provided to the following students:

- Students in PreK (vision only), Kindergarten, 1st and **8th** grades
- **All students K-8 new to the state of Maryland** that do not have a record of prior vision and hearing screening within the last 12 months

- High School students enrolling in the public school system in the United States for the first time.

Patapsco's vision and hearing screening will be held on Wednesday, January 21. If your child has glasses, please make sure that he or she wears them on the screening day.

Your child will receive these screenings unless you object for religious reasons. Please send a letter to your child's school health room if you choose to opt out of the Health Department screenings.

If your child does not pass either the vision or hearing screen, you will receive a letter from his or her school notifying you of this result. It is then recommended that you take your child to have his or her vision evaluated by an eye care specialist or that you contact your child's medical provider for a referral to an audiologist for a complete hearing evaluation.

A vision screening does not take the place of a comprehensive eye exam.

Should you have any questions, please contact our school nurse at 410-313-2848 or the Vision and Hearing Program Supervisor at 410-313-7210. If you need information about the Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program, please contact the Howard County Health Department at 410-313-5845

'Tis the Season!

Cold and flu season is here! How can you help?

- Donate tissues!** Please consider dropping off a box of tissues in the front office.
- Practice healthy habits - get plenty of sleep, be physically active, drink plenty of fluids, wash your hands often, and eat nutritious foods.
- If you have cold and flu symptoms, stay at home and rest!

Food Pantry

The Howard High School Food Pantry will be open January 15th from 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM. See the attached [flyer](#) for more information.

2026 Family Academy Conference

2026 HCPSS Family Academy Conference: HCPSS families are invited to save the date for the **2026 Family Academy Conference on Wednesday, March 4, 2026**, from **6:00–8:30 pm at Long Reach High School**. Families can look forward to a **light dinner, a community resource fair, and interactive workshops** focused on academic achievement, well-being, and family engagement. Workshop topics will include college

and career readiness, special education supports, curriculum updates, hands-on learning strategies for use at home, and more. For more information, visit [HCPSS News](#).

Artificial Intelligence Training and Mentorship for K-12 Students and Educators (ATM4K12)

The Artificial Intelligence Training and Mentorship for K-12 Students and Educators (ATM4K12) will provide free workshops, virtual office hours and mentorships aiming to support middle school students and K-12 educators in Maryland. Benefits of participating in this project include:

1. Lunch or refreshments will be provided.
2. The project team will help participants to submit their work to IEEE Integrated STEM education conference which will be held in March 2026 at Princeton University. The conference registration will be covered by this project if the participants' papers are accepted.
3. The winners of this Presidential AI Challenge will get up to \$10,000 from the White House.

Students from grades 6-8 are invited to apply to participate in this project. Please fill in the Google Form to indicate your interest:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-ojh56WCineyvtB6NiEp9que5Au1Mu503q5eqy8xgh0/edit>

The January 17, 2026 Office Hours will be 2:30-5 pm in the Marvin Thomas Room at East Columbia Branch Library.

PREVIOUSLY SHARED

Patapsco Rising 6th Grade Parent Night

Click [here](#) to view a flyer for the Rising 6th Grade Parent Night (Current 5th Grade Students) [Español](#)

Date: 1/13/26

Time: 6pm

Location: Patapsco Middle School 8885 Old Frederick Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21043

Come and learn about:

- 6th grade courses
- Creating balance for your student
- Middle school schedule
- GT, extracurriculars, and seminar offerings

Yearbook Orders

Have you ordered your Patapsco 2025-2026 yearbook?! It's not too late! To guarantee your yearbook, order soon at jostensyearbooks.com. Yearbooks will be distributed during the last week of school. If you would like to check if you have already ordered, please look in your email for a receipt from Jostens, or email kalina_salsman@hcpss.org.

Message from the Health Room

This is a friendly reminder from the Health Room regarding the Howard County Public School System's illness policy. As we enter flu season, it is especially important to help keep our school community healthy and safe.

Please be mindful of the following guidelines when deciding whether your child should attend school:

- **Children must be fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication)** before returning to school.
- **Vomiting or diarrhea:** Students should remain home until symptom-free for **24 hours**.
- **Contagious illnesses** such as strep throat, conjunctivitis (pink eye), or influenza often require staying home for at least 24 hours after starting treatment or as directed by your healthcare provider.
- If your child is experiencing **persistent cough, significant fatigue, chills, body aches or symptoms that interfere with learning**, please consider keeping them home to rest.

With flu and other seasonal illnesses circulating, we appreciate your help in preventing the spread of germs within our classrooms. Keeping children home when they are sick protects not only your child but also classmates, staff, and our wider school community. Thank you for your attention to these guidelines and for helping us maintain a healthy school environment.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Health Room.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Ailstock, BSN, RN

HCPSS cluster nurse

Patapsco Middle School

Register for the BSAP Saturday Math Academy Spring 2026 Program

[Registration](#) for the HCPSS Black Student Achievement Program (BSAP) Saturday Math Academy will open on Saturday, January 10, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. until capacity is reached. The program offers an in-person enrichment program for HCPSS students in all levels of math for grades 3 through 12.

FAMILY Read the Rainbow

Registration is now open for our next FAMILY Read the Rainbow scheduled for Tuesday, January 27th @ 6:00PM. This is a FREE and VIRTUAL event and open to all. Participants will engage in a read aloud of the book, *Like THAT Eleanor: The Amazing Power of Being an Ally* by Lee Wind followed by a discussion with the author. The first 50 families with children in grades 5 and under who register for the program will receive a free copy of the book, courtesy of our partner, CARY.

[Flyer](#)

Register [HERE](#)

PTA and Music Boosters

Please consider joining our PTA and Music Boosters. Each parent-led organization does so much for our school. We appreciate your membership and donations as they directly support the students and staff at Patapsco Middle School. Please consider joining the [PTA](#) and/or [Music Boosters](#) as we could not do a lot of the exciting initiatives for our kids without these organizations!

Cell Phones

Cell phones should not be seen or heard during the school day. Reminders about the [HCPSS Policy 8080-Student Personal Device Use in Schools](#) were shared with students on the first day of school.

Forgotten Items

We are happy to accept lunches, instruments, homework, school projects, keys, or other items as long as they are brought to school before 10:30. All items can be put on the table in the foyer and labeled with student's name and grade. Lunches that are brought in late are taken to the cafeteria and a general announcement is made.

We cannot accept items for delivery to students after this time period, with the exception of emergency situations, as we are committed to minimizing classroom interruptions throughout the school day. We know homework, projects and instruments are important to our students, so we ask for your help in assisting students prepare for the day the night before, or the morning of, to ensure they have everything they need.