

HUNTINGDON AREA HIGH SCHOOL

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Mr. Travis R. Lee,
Secondary Principal

Mr. Brent A. Stoltzfus,
Assistant Principal

"ALL LEARNERS, ALL FUTURES"

To: Parents and Guardians
From: Mr. Travis R. Lee, High School Principal
Re: October Parent Update
Date: October 21, 2019

Greetings Parents and Guardians,

The High School has been a very busy environment over the past two months, so we are reaching out to update you about the various happenings in the building as we approach the end of the first marking period on Thursday, October 24, 2019. There is a lot of information to share, so we are organizing the information by *Academics*, *School Safety and Behavioral Health*, and *Extracurricular Activities*. The information is intended to be brief for your review, but comprehensive enough for you to gain an understanding of the learning that is taking place and important events. This information is provided on the following pages.

We will continue to use the school website and Skylert messages (email, text, and phone calls) to continue to communicate information throughout the year, as well as sharing information with learners in their classes and homerooms. I strongly encourage you to speak with your learners about their school experience, to give them guidance and monitor their progress in pursuit of being college and career ready, and to grow in their appreciation for our school and community.

If you have questions about any of the information presented, please contact the school office. The school looks forward to continuing to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to enhance the learning environment and to work towards providing more, and better, opportunities for our children. It's a pleasure to work with your children during this important and influential time in their lives. There's a lot of great things happening at HAHS, so let's all be proud to be a Bearcat!

Sincerely,

Travis R. Lee,
High School Principal

School Information

Academic Information

- **End of Marking Period 1**
 - The last day of the first grading quarter for the 2019-2020 school year is Thursday, October 24. Learners will be receiving their report cards on Wednesday, October 30.
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences**
 - Parent/Teacher conferences will be held on Thursday, November 7 from 11:45 am until 6:45 pm. Conferences will be scheduled by appointments. Please contact the school office, and/or speak with your learners' teachers, to schedule an appointment. Some learners and families will receive a letter from teachers requesting that an appointment be scheduled.
- **Academic Supports**
 - HAHS is very fortunate to have an AmeriCorps teacher, Ms. Silva, with us this year. Ms. Silva is available to supply tutoring and academic supports to learners, both during the school day and before or after school. Learners may seek Ms. Silva out, sign-up for tutoring services in the HS Office, or you may call the school to arrange support with her. Teachers and counselors may also make tutoring recommendations for learners.
 - The Huntingdon Community Center also has after school tutoring services. They provide tutoring Monday - Thursday from 4:00 - 6:00 pm. Please visit the HCC's website for additional information.
- **Keystone Exams**
 - Learners that took the Keystone Exams during May of 2019 should have received their official results in the mail last week.
 - Learners that will be taking the Keystone Exams in December, 2019, will be receiving an additional mailing in the near future. Learners will receive the exact exams that they will be taking, and their reporting locations, the week prior to testing. However, it is the current expectation that all learners who have tested, and have yet to reach proficiency, will be re-testing during the December testing window. The school does not intend to test juniors an additional time, if not proficient, in May of 2020. However, proficiency on the Keystone Exams is a graduation requirement for the class of 2022 (current sophomores) and beyond. This information will be explained more thoroughly in the coming mailing, and learners will receive updates about this throughout the year.
- **Flexible Instructional Day (FID)**
 - The school's first Flexible Instructional Day (FID) took place on Monday, October 14. This day was a success in terms of the high level of attendance and the assignments and tasks completed by the learners. The school will be reviewing the FID feedback survey to address issues and concerns that may have arisen during the day, but overall, due to the planning and communication between teachers and learners, the day was meaningful. This experience was an example of how learning can take place in flexible ways.
 - Please note that prior to utilizing an additional FID, we will exhaust our school make-up days, and we will only call an FID if a determination is made by 12:00 pm to close for the following day, in order to give learners and staff time to prepare.
- **iPads for Off-Campus Use**
 - The first day that iPads were available for off-campus use was Friday, September 27. We appreciate the cooperation of the learners, families, and staff in ensuring that the proper paperwork is completed (Handbook/AUP form, Off-Campus form, Insurance form)

before iPads can go home. Learners may still utilize these forms if they now (or in the future) elect to use the iPads off-campus.

- Using the iPads off-campus is not a requirement, but does give learners flexibility in continuing their learning, and assignment completion, outside of the scheduled school day.
- **Rachel's Challenge Program and Clothing Drive**
 - At the start of the school year, learner's participated in a Rachel's Challenge presentation, which is to generate a spirit of kindness, compassion, and a willingness to help others in enhancing our school environment and making it a positive place to learn.
 - There are multiple initiatives the groups of learners will be participating in throughout the year, as part of the Friends of Rachel (FOR) club. One project, which learners in the project-based learning Kinnect group have developed (led by Kaitlynn Kester, Olivia Grissinger, and Jasmine Lender), is already underway! Their project, ***Rachel's Closet***, provides an area within the school where learners in need of clothing items, toiletries, and basic food items, will be able to get these items in a nonjudgmental and supportive manner. Both HAMS and HAMS will have a Rachel's Closet, and we have begun receiving and organizing items already! To help support this project, there is a ***clothing drive on Saturday, November 2nd, from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm at HAMS***. This event is in conjunction with the Soup and Chili Cook-Off that benefits the HAMS PBIS program. Please refer to Mr. Payne's previous message about the items needed for the clothing drive, or contact the school office. We hope that you will consider supporting this important, and needed, project!

School Safety, Behavioral Health, and Supports

- **School Safety Month**
 - October is School Safety Month. The safety of our learners and staff is always a high priority, and the school district continues to review and assess policies, procedures, and provided trainings in order to utilize best practices and to ensure a safe environment for learning.
- **Principal Assembly**
 - There will be grade level principal assemblies next week to review school safety information, to review the Safe 2 Say Something anonymous reporting system, and to share additional school expectations.
 - The safety presentation will help prepare for a school intruder drill, which will also take place next week. This drill will be of a standard nature, and will not be on the scale of a drill that we had previously planned for last spring. However, regardless of the scale of the drill, it is important that we always take each drill seriously, and that we practice our preparation and response to critical incidents on a routine basis, so that we provide the safest environment for our learners and staff.
- **District Behavioral Health Assessment**
 - During the week of October 7, the school district participated in a behavioral health assessment, in order to review the procedures and supports that we have in place to keep our learners safe and to promote their wellness.
 - This assessment relied heavily upon school mental health and administrative procedures and supports, though the team that was at HAMS to assess did get to conduct a building walkthrough to see our learning environment and to speak with several teachers and learners to hear about their perspectives. We are looking forward to the results of this assessment, in order to continue to help us in ensuring that we have the resources

necessary to support the needs of our learners. We should be proud that our district has taken this proactive measure of conducting this assessment!

- **School Social Worker Services at HAHS**
 - This year HAHS is very fortunate to have a part-time social worker, Mrs. Katee Rook. Mrs. Rook is an Intermediate Unit 11 employee, and is at HAHS three days each week. Her role in serving learners at HAHS is to be a liaison between families and community services, to offer support to learners through individual and group counseling, and to provide support and insight to our school mental health team. Mrs. Rook works closely with school counselors and administrators, as well as the Student Assistance Program (SAP).
- **Professional Learning for Staff**
 - To continue to focus on creating a safe and supportive environment for learners, school staff recently completed a training on Suicide Awareness, and will be discussing an article about Trauma-Informed Teaching Strategies within their Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).
- **Aavidum**
 - There is a school club, called Aavidum, that has been established to provide education about, and support learners with suicide awareness and prevention activities. Mrs. Miller, the middle school counselor, leads this group. Aavidum's slogan is, "I've Got Your Back," and this group began last school year with the help of the social work department from Juniata College. Please know that this is a supportive resource that we have for your learners, and aligns to our PBIS Bearcat expectations, as well as to continue the mission of Rachel's Challenge. Learners should contact Mrs. Miller if interested.
- **Resources**
 - Please see the end of this memo for resources that may be helpful in regards to behavioral health supports.

Extracurricular Activities and Athletics

- **Spirit Week/Homecoming**
 - Spirit Week, sponsored by Student Council, was held October 7 - 11, culminating with the Mr. Huntingdon assembly during the morning of 10/11, and Pep Assembly in the afternoon, a parade in the early evening, the crowning of Homecoming Queen at the football game, and then on Saturday with the homecoming dance sponsored by the Key Club. Congratulations to Roseanne Zoerner, the 2019 HAHS Homecoming Queen, and Isaiiah Reed, winner of the Mr. Huntingdon competition! A special thank you to the Student Council, Mrs. Miller, and Mrs. Buckley for their help in organizing all of the spirit week events.
- **Milestone Soccer and Football Games**
 - This Wednesday, 10/23, Boys Soccer hosts Penns Valley HS in the first round of the District 6 soccer playoffs at 8:00 pm. This game will be part of a double-header playoff game at Juniata College's Gibbel Stadium, with our Girls Soccer team hosting Juniata HS at 6:00 pm. The boys team will be looking to earn the program's 300th win, so we are hoping for a large crowd to support both teams in postseason play! We are expecting that *The Jungle* shows up to create a great atmosphere!
 - During Friday's final regular season football game, the Bearcats will be going for the program's 700th win! In addition to this being senior night for the team, we hope to have a large crowd to support all seniors and to create an atmosphere to help earn this milestone victory and continue on to the playoffs.

- **Athletic Senior Nights**
 - Some of our athletic teams and clubs have already had their Senior Nights, but we still have two yet to come:
 - Varsity Girls Volleyball: Tuesday, October 22
 - Varsity Football, Cheerleading, and Band: Friday, October 25
 - Friday's ceremony will begin at 6:30 pm. Parents/Guardians of seniors - please be at the field by 6:15 pm, and report to fence by the home bench.
- **Winter Sports Physicals**
 - Winter Sports Physicals will be held at HAHS on Tuesday, November 5. Learners that previously had a sports physical for this year do not need a second physical, unless they require a recertification from a previous injury.
 - Athletes should work with coaches to ensure that they have their physical forms with them for the physical session, and that they have completed all of the required documents prior to the season beginning.
- **New Athletic Director**
 - HAHS welcomes Mr. John Bilich, a 1998 HAHS graduate, as the new athletic director. Mr. Bilich officially begins his tenure as AD today on Monday, October 21. His administrative and coaching experiences will serve HAHS well, and we want all to welcome him as he works to strengthen and support our athletic programs.
- **Band and Choir Fall Concert**
 - HAHS's fall concert will take place on Tuesday, October 22, at 7:00 pm in the HS Auditorium. This will be these groups' first large performances for the year, and we are looking forward to hearing what they have been preparing since the start of the school year.
- **Musical - *Shrek***
 - The music department announced on Wednesday, October 9, that this year's school musical will be *Shrek the Musical*. Our musical department always produces great shows, and we hope that this year's selection will generate a lot of interest among our younger learners as well!
- **October Art Walk**
 - The Art and Foreign Language departments participated in October's Art Walk last Thursday, October 17. The theme for the event was to celebrate *Dia de los Muertos*, or Day of the Dead, a Mexican holiday. If you get a chance, please check out the altar display in the auditorium lobby - it looks great!
- **Student Activities Board**
 - HAHS will soon be implementing a Student Activities Board. This project, stemming from research and a project in Ms. McMath's class last year, has been led by senior Caroline Sliver and Ms. McMath. This board will have representation from each grade's class officers and from the various clubs within the school. This group, then, will meet to help coordinate the overall activities that take place within the school, to provide feedback and an avenue for sharing information from the learners' perspectives about school issues, and to work on special projects to enhance the school experience for all learners.

School Resources and Suicide Prevention Information

- Student Assistance Program (SAP): Please see school counselors. Forms available on school website.
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or visit www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org
- Crisis Text Line: TEXT PA to 741-741 or visit <http://www.crisistextline.org>
- Juniata Valley Tri-County Crisis: 1-800-929-9583 or www.ucbh.org
- Aavidum: <http://aavidum.com/cms>

