



Huntingdon Area School District



SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Mr. Travis R. Lee,
Secondary Principal

Huntingdon Area Middle School

Mrs. Amy J. Mykut, Assistant Principal
2500 Cassady Avenue, Huntingdon, PA 16652
(814)643-2900

Huntingdon Area High School

Mr. Nicholas A. Payne, Assistant Principal
2400 Cassady Avenue, Suite 1, Huntingdon, PA 16652
(814)643-1080

To: Parents and Guardians of Secondary School Learners
From: Mr. Travis Lee, Secondary Principal
Re: Parent Updates and Information
Date: March 5, 2019

Greetings Parents and Guardians,

The Huntingdon Area School District is pleased to announce that we will be adding a secondary school administrator to our team, and realigning the secondary administrative roles.

Mr. Nicholas Payne will be taking on the role as Middle School Principal and Mr. Matt Marter will become the interim High School Assistant Principal. Mrs. Amy Mykut and myself, Travis Lee, will retain our roles as Middle School Assistant Principal and Secondary Principal, respectively. Mr. Payne moves to the middle-level, having served as a teacher at HAMS for eleven years, and as an assistant principal at HAHS for six years. Mr. Marter has been a Social Studies teacher at HAHS for the past six years, and completed his principal internship experience with the district. Mr. Payne and Mr. Marter are very deserving of these positions, and I would like for you to welcome them to these new roles!

There will be a transitional period as this change occurs, and Mr. Payne's role shifts to the Middle School and Mr. Lee's primarily to the High School. With that said, the secondary administration will continue to work as a team as all adjust to the new responsibilities. Ultimately, we are excited for this change as we believe that this realignment will help our administrative team be more responsive to learner and staff needs in each building. Mr. Payne and Mr. Marter have already begun to meet with learners and staff in these new capacities, and there's been a positive response from the learners!

Please read below for additional information for HAMS and HAHS learners and families.

Midpoint of Marking Period Three

With the many delays and cancellations that learners, teachers, and administrators have dealt with, we are still looking to find our “flow” and routine since the semester began. However, Friday, March 1st marked the midpoint of the marking period. Please speak with your learners about their progress in their courses, and help them to continue to follow-through with their academic expectations and assignments. We’ve all had to be flexible with what the weather has brought us, but we must continue to move forward. Remember that you can always check your learner’s grades in Skyward, and you can reach out to their teachers with any questions. Any learner that is not performing satisfactorily at the midpoint will have parent notification made.

The Momo Challenge

On Friday, March 1, 2019, the school district posted an update on the district website and social media pages about the Momo Challenge, a recent internet trend that encourages self-harm. Attached to this parent update is a letter from the school administrators addressing this topic. Please consider reviewing this information with your learners, and emphasize good digital citizenship practices.

JUUL/Vaping Survey

The Huntingdon Interact Club, the youth club affiliated with the Rotary International organization, is collaborating with Juniata College interns and the Huntingdon Force for Health program, a JC Blair initiative, to gather information about the use of Juuling/Vaping among our secondary youth. These groups will use the data gathered to follow-up with information and targeted education that promotes positive choices, and hopefully leads to a healthier community. We will be introducing this survey to learners during the week of March 11, 2019. ***If you do not want your learner to participate in the survey, please contact the learner’s school office by Friday, March 8, 2019.*** Learners not participating will simply not respond to the survey when it is posted.

Safe2Say Something Program Update

Since the implementation of the Safe2Say Something program, we have had various alerts and information shared about potential issues involving learners and their safety. The administration and counseling staff have been working hard at both HAMS and HAHS to address each tip, which includes gathering additional information, reviewing information about specific learners or issues, and taking actions that include recommendations for school or community supports, contact with parents, and/or discipline. This has truly been a team effort, and this system is helpful in ensuring that learners are getting the supports that they may need.

State Assessment Information

Middle school learners will be participating in the PSSAs beginning mid-April, and high school learners in the Keystone Exams in mid-May. Additional information with the exact testing dates, testing expectations, and testing responsibilities for learners will be communicated in the coming weeks.

End of Year Calendar

With many delays, early dismissals, and cancellations, the end of the year calendar is being revised. A revised calendar will be shared in the near future. However, please note that to assist our senior learners, graduation will still remain on Wednesday, June 5, 2019.

Extra- and Cocurricular Activities

Our learners have demonstrated their well-roundedness throughout the winter season in multiple activities. In the academic realm, our mock trial team, who has been undefeated in three previous trials, will be participating in the district playoffs tonight at the Cambria County Courthouse. The Academic Quiz Bowl team qualified for the national championships in Chicago in May. Team member Andrew Buonaccorsi will be competing in the Individual Player National Championship Quiz Bowl Tournament in Chicago in April, based upon his performance at last year's national competition, which is quite an accomplishment! We wish all of these teams the best of luck!

HAHS has also had a great winter musically. We had seven learners move on to regional band. Richard Widman will be participating in All-State Band, and Patrick Sweet in All-State Orchestra. In choir, we have seven learners moving on to regional choir, and we are hoping to garner state-level entries as well! In addition, the HAMS and HAHS choirs will be traveling to Harrisburg to sing at the state capitol rotunda on March 13. We would also like to share that this year's musical, *Catch Me If You Can*, will be held on May 9, 10, and 11. Our learners are hard at work preparing for the show, and we hope that you will be able to come and enjoy it!

Creatively, we would like to recognize two individual learners for their art accomplishments. Paige Long has had a ceramic piece accepted as part of a national show for the National Council for the Education for Ceramic Arts, and Hannah Garman recently had a patriotic picture displayed at Congressman Joyce's swearing-in ceremony in Washington, DC. As an entire art department, we had learners from all buildings participate in Art Walk on Thursday, February 21, by having their art displayed at Standing Stone Coffee. Check it out if you get a chance!

Huntingdon Area High School also had a strong showing athletically during the winter season. Our wrestling and girls basketball teams earned berths in the district championships, and our boys basketball and boys swim teams both clinched district titles (back to back wins for

basketball, and a three-peat for swimming!). In addition, individual accomplishments for swimming include Haley Goldstone, Nick Buckley, and the two boys relay teams consisting of Ben Atherton, Nick Buckley, Andrew Edwards, Colby Grubb, and Marshall Lowe moving on to the state meet. In wrestling, five wrestlers participated in the regional competition (Miles Baney, Brynen Kisiel, Ryder Kocik, Roland Mills, and Isaiah Reed), with Miles Baney advancing to the state competition. Lastly, in basketball, Nick Rigby broke the all-time HAHS scoring record!

There are many other accomplishments and achievements that we could capture to demonstrate the success of our learners in ways that are not shown in the classroom, but we hope that you've enjoyed reading about some of what is taking place at HAHS/HAMS.

In closing, I encourage you to speak with your learners about their school experience, to give them guidance and help them monitor their progress in pursuit of being college and career ready, and to grow in their appreciation for our school and community. I look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with all school stakeholders to enhance the learning environment and work towards providing more, and better, opportunities for our children. Let's all be proud to be a Bearcat!

Sincerely,

Travis R. Lee,
Secondary Principal

Dear Families,

School districts across the country have recently become aware of an internet trend that may pose a safety risk for children. The “Momo Challenge” is the latest in the list of many such challenges that have been appearing on a variety of websites around the internet lately. Affected websites and apps may include YouTube, YouTube Kids, WhatsApp, and Facebook. These challenges often persuade children and adolescents to participate in dangerous behaviors. The Momo Challenge uses a grim looking meme in an attempt to persuade viewers to engage in behaviors that harm themselves or others.

Many of the websites and apps where the Momo Challenge has appeared have responded by removing the video. However, the same video or other iterations have still resurfaced throughout the internet.

The Huntingdon Area School District continues to utilize secure web filters throughout the district network which block the use of Facebook and WhatsApp. The district also continues to employ restricted mode in YouTube. However, we wanted to share this information with families so that parents are aware and can have informed conversations with their children about these sensitive subjects.

Parents can learn more about the Momo Challenge and other online challenges by visiting Common Sense Media at the following web address:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/viral-youtube-challenges-internet-stunts-popular-with-kids>

The site also gives suggestions for addressing these challenges with children.

The Huntingdon Area School District is grateful for your partnership in dealing with these kinds of sensitive subjects and helping to keep children safe online. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child’s school.

Sincerely,

HASD Administrative Team