



HMS Family Newsletter

09.30.2023



Dear Families,

The Fall season has truly arrived. Mornings at HMS witness our 6th graders arriving in sweatshirts, shedding that layer only after playing tag and fútbol before class; we are running football routes, jumping rope, and playing Newcomb at lunch in the mild sunshine. This is my favorite time of year, for Fall reminds me that change is constant. Our students are continually striving to figure out who they are and what they stand for; HMS faculty is conscientiously assessing what our students know and challenging them to deepen their learning; the administration is in a full court press, striving to reform how the school's systems support students and educators. In all, it's a time of transition and transformation - and FACTS, it's not always smooth sailing; but there's a positive buzz in the hallways and in classrooms. It was great

to experience this new season with you at our potluck and open house last week - thank you for bringing tasty food and making our house your own. We look forward to more gatherings to celebrate our learning community together.

Sincerely, Melanee Alexander ~ Principal

A recap of what's happened in the last two weeks:

- We held Adult Assemblies as part of our Open House schedule. The purpose of the assemblies was to make sure that everyone hears the same message from your administration. Represented in [this slideshow](#) is information shared with staff during our opening days inservice, messages we shared with students their first days (and daily since then), and information we want families to mull over and reach out about.
- Station #4 Fire Department supported our first emergency drill. All were accounted for and the drill was complete in 8 minutes - great job everyone! Upcoming in October is an options-based drill. More information for students and families as well as a warning will precede the actual drill.
- Students received their planners. Teachers are providing direct instruction on project- and time-management skills and strategies, using the planners as one of the tools. They are asking your student to record homework (even if it's accurate to write "none") on a daily

basis as well as get their signature. Ask to see the planner!

- Educators across the district engaged in the second formal module of professional learning focused on antiracist instructional practices, deconstructing white supremacy culture, and a variety of content-specific topics around inclusive and equity-focused instruction. I'm proud that this district has committed to years-long series on these topics that will support deeper learning as well as ensure that our students feel a strong sense of belonging to each other, to us, and to their schools. All of us have a right and responsibility to ensure that our biases don't impede our students' learning or sense of self - so this time is well spent. **Our next professional learning day is on Wednesday, October 25** (11:30AM release for students). For more information on how this learning reinforces our district goals, [click here](#).

EVENTS TO STRENGTHEN and CELEBRATE COMMUNITY

PTO meeting	Movie Night for HMS Students	UBUNTU Service Project
Thursday, October 5	Friday, October 13th	Saturday, October 28th
7:45 - 9AM in person or online	6:30 - 8:30PM	10 - 11:30AM
	We will provide water and popcorn	Battening down the garden hatches for winter

Take note of these items:

- **Apple watch? No thank you - needs to stay home or powered off and in the locker / main office.** We don't need work arounds to the cell phone policy, which is running smoothly. Please reach out with questions or concerns.
- Sport Panther gear! Access to the HMS school store is [here](#).
- **4-day weekend for students on the horizon: No School on Friday 10/6 or Monday 10/9.**
- Schoology is the online platform we use for classwork and homework assignments. You can see your student's schoology page: here are [written directions](#) as well as a [video](#).
- Field trips are coming up! 7/8 grade teams are headed to Isle LaMotte in early October to study fossils. Contact mcullen@bsdvt.org for more information, including how to chaperone.
- **Family conferences are coming up in November.** Below is information from our Office of Teaching and Learning:

How will conferences work this year?

The Fall and Spring conferences in BSD middle schools will be led by students. Many middle schools in Vermont and around the country are moving to this model. Conferences will be in-person, unless a virtual conference is requested by the family. All conferences will also have

the option for an “adults only” conversation, in addition to the student-led portion, at the request of the family.

How is a student-led conference different from a parent-teacher conference?

In a student-led conference, the student presents their work and their perspective on their learning, strengths, challenges, and goals. Our students have started preparing to present their strengths, challenges, and goals for this school year, and to show some examples of their work. There will also be a chance for families to share their thoughts and ask questions.

Why is the Burlington School District holding student-led conferences instead of teacher-led conferences?

One of the top priorities for our district is deeper learning for every student. We want students to feel empowered and engaged, and we want our practices to meet the individual needs of each student. We commit to providing students agency in education. A student-led conference is a way to put the student’s learning and their voice about their experience at the center of the conversation, and to ensure that they are partners in their education.

The student-led conferences are also part of the Burlington middle schools Personalized Learning Plans, or PLP, process. Through the PLP, students consider their own strengths and challenges, set goals, identify steps toward progress, gather evidence of progress, and reflect. These are the same habits and skills that students learn by participating in a student-led conference.

When are conferences?

- Monday, November 21 and Tuesday, November 22.
- There is no regularly scheduled school on those days.

Where can I learn more about student-led conferences?

The UVM Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education has some excellent resources.

- [A video showing what a student-led conference looks like](#)
- [The Parent Role in Student-Led Conferences](#)
- [Edutopia video about student-led conferences](#)
- [Resources for educators about student-led conferences](#)

FAMILY TO DO’S

- Complete the Returning Student Registration - we are almost at 100%! [Log into your PowerSchool account to complete this update as soon as possible.](#)
- Sign up for the ****NEW ROUND**** of afterschool clubs and activities; [here is the online form.](#) Remember, if your student is signed up for an afterschool club:

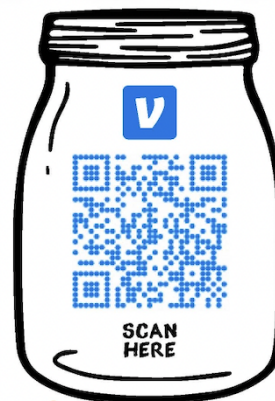
- They report to the cafeteria for supper at 3PM
- Club advisor meets them in the cafe and takes them to the room
- They are dismissed from the club at 5PM unless they bring written permission from a caregiver
- No exits and re-entry are permitted
- Students must be signed up in order to participate
- **The Miller Center will open - teen center style - on October 1 - Mondays and Fridays**



GIVE A LITTLE, HELP A LOT.
DONATE NOW!

PTO BENEFITS

- ✓ SCHOOL EVENTS
- ✓ FUNDRAISING
- ✓ UPGRADES
- ✓ TEACHER/STAFF SUPPORT
- ✓ CLASS TRIPS



**WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR MEMBERS & VOLUNTEERS TO HELP OUT!
PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING A PART OF THE PTO TODAY!**