



Starting off STRONG!

After a spectacular start on August 3, our students and families have settled into their normal routines. This year marks the beginning of the new 2026–2031 Community-Inspired Strategic Plan for Henry County Schools. This plan emphasizes student achievement and readiness; organizational and operational effectiveness; culture, climate, and community engagement; high-quality employees; and safety.

The strategic plan also reflects substantial school board investments in STEM (\$3.85 million), fine arts (\$2.6 million), and expanded opportunities for advanced coursework that led to notable gains this past year—including a 6.3 point increase in the overall district College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) score and an all-time high school graduation rate of 92.3%. Additionally, the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement identified 26 HCS schools as “Beating the Odds” and four schools exited federal Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) status.



Let’s Stay Connected!

We are excited to share Issue No. 1 of our quarterly Family Connections Newsletter for the 2026-2027 school year! The purpose of this newsletter is to connect our most valuable allies, which are all of our HCS families, with various resources, tools, and community partners. We believe that this connection, in turn, supports our most valuable treasure, our students! Please be sure to look out for the next copy of the Family Connections Newsletter, which will be published during Quarter 2 (December 2026).

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Family Engagement on Every Level

Although it may look different as children grow older, family engagement is crucial to the success of a child regardless of the grade. Here are some practical ways for busy parents to support their child from Kindergarten to 12th grade!



ELEMENTARY LEVEL

- Create structured routines (morning, homework, bedtime).
- Establish a dedicated learning space within the home.
- Confirm preferred communication (email, Class Dojo, Remind, etc.) with teachers and school staff to work as a team to support your child.
- Participate in school's academic, extracurricular activities, and parent/district input opportunities.
- Serve as a volunteer on various school committees, including school advisory boards or PTOs (if applicable).
- Keep track of your child's academic progress by reviewing Daily Folder, Infinite Campus Parent Portal or teacher correspondence.
- Use games and manipulatives to reinforce skills that your child is learning at school. Contact your teacher for additional resources.
- **SIGN UP FOR INFINITE CAMPUS AND CHECK IT REGULARLY!**

MIDDLE GRADES

- Reinforce morning, homework and bedtime routines. Intervene where necessary. If your child is alone during morning and bedtime routines, consider phone and video check-ins.
- Meet with all teachers (Open House, Curriculum Night, etc.) and confirm communication preferences.
- Encourage dialogue about school with your child by asking open-ended questions.
- Seek guidance from teachers or school support staff on academic resources to help your child with assignments.
- Encourage student participation in school clubs, athletics, and extracurriculars.
- Visit school's website and social media accounts regularly to keep up with school activities and events.
- Join the PTO, booster club, volunteer, and attend school council meetings.
- **SIGN UP FOR INFINITE CAMPUS AND CHECK IT REGULARLY!**

HIGH SCHOOL

- Monitor your child's morning, homework, and bedtime routines. Continue to enforce age-appropriate responsibilities. Intervene as needed.
- If unable to meet in person, introduce yourself to all teachers, counselor and the College & Career Readiness Coach (if applicable) via email.
- Encourage your child to participate in school clubs, athletics, or extracurricular activities. Volunteer your time and/or resources for support.
- Continue to monitor your student's academic progress via Parent Portal (Infinite Campus). Encourage them to advocate for themselves. Intervene as needed.
- Visit school's website and social media accounts to keep up with activities, events, and deadlines.
- Discuss post-secondary options with your student. Provide guidance as needed.
- **SIGN UP FOR INFINITE CAMPUS AND CHECK IT REGULARLY!**

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Every day in the classroom is a chance for children to grow, connect, and build the foundation for their future. Henry County Schools deeply believes that regular, on-time attendance is at the heart of that journey, because success in school and in life starts with showing up.

Missing a day here and there might not seem like much, but those missed moments add up quickly. By working together, we can make sure every child feels supported, excited to learn, and ready to reach their dreams.



Why Attendance Matters

- **Better grades** - daily review of curriculum increases content mastery and test scores
- **Reading on grade level** - consistent attendance in early years sets strong foundation by 3rd grade
- **Higher graduation rates** - students who attend school more often are more likely to finish high school.
- **Social skills** - Stronger communication and conflict resolution skills
- **Established routine and habits** - discipline and responsibility for future jobs
- **Support systems** - students are connected to school resources and activities.

Source: [Attendance Works](#)

Ways to Help Your Child Build the Habit of Good Attendance

- Establish and stick to a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack bookbag, gym bag, etc. the night before.
- Schedule non-urgent medical appointments and family vacations when school is not in session.
- Monitor child's attendance via the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

If an Absence is Unavoidable

- Request medical excuse from physician's office BEFORE you leave. Submit excuse directly to school's Attendance staff.
- Contact your child's school regarding extended illnesses or pending surgeries.

For more information on the HCS Attendance Regulation, please visit the Student Services webpage



<https://bit.ly/HCSAttendanceMatters>

Tips and Strategies for a Successful School Year

As your student settles into the 2026-2027 school year, here are some tips for families to keep their spark for learning burning bright!

Establish a ROUTINE and STICK to it

- Set consistent morning, afternoon and nighttime routines.
- Pack lunches and lay out clothes the night before.
- Create dedicated space and time for studying and homework.
- Enforce age appropriate bedtime expectations.

Keep lines of COMMUNICATION open with school

- Continue to review elementary student's daily folders
- Enable communication preferences and notifications in IC Parent Portal
- Review emails, newsletters or messages from school.

Remain CONSISTENT

- Keep asking your child questions about what they are learning
- Continue reviewing homework and assignments with students. Have them explain it to you as if you do not understand.
- Utilize school/district resources such as [Henry Connects](#) and [GA Tutor \(9th - 12th\)](#)



INFINITE CAMPUS - GET CONNECTED - STAY CONNECTED!

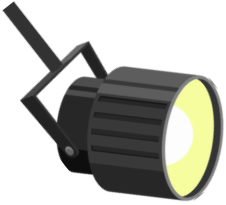
The Parent Portal (Infinite Campus) is a web-based program that provides all parents with the ability to view academic information. Infinite Campus provides parents information about their children's schoolwork and progress. The Parent Portal can be accessed via the web or app.

- Assignments
- Attendance
- Class schedules ([How to view your child's schedule](#))
- Grades



Click [HERE](#) or scan below to set up your Infinite Campus!



**DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT****FEDERAL PROGRAMS - TITLE I****WHAT IS TITLE I?**

Title I, Part A is a part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The purpose of Title I, Part A is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments. Title I funding supports state and local reform efforts tied to challenging state academic standards in order to reinforce and enhance efforts to improve teaching and learning for students. Title I, Part A programs must be based on effective means of improving student achievement and include evidenced-based strategies. These funds are used to provide remediation to children, develop staff, and engage families.

TITLE I FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Henry County believes family engagement is a fundamental component of student success and improvement. We recognize families as partner and experts on the needs of your children.

Henry County Schools' Title I Office works directly with our 24 Title I schools to support their efforts to actively engage parents and build their capacity to support their children academically.

For more information on Henry County Schools Title I Family Engagement Program, please scan this QR code:



<https://bit.ly/TitleIFamEng27>

SCHOOLWIDE PROGRAMS

A schoolwide program is a school in which children from low-income families make up at least 40% of enrollment. In schoolwide programs, Title I funds are used to serve all of the children in the school.

ADDITIONAL INFO ABOUT OUR TITLE I SCHOOLS

<https://bit.ly/FedPro27>

All parents and families are invited and encouraged to attend our annual parent input meeting on **Thursday, February 25, 2027** at 5:30 p.m. at the Henry County Learning and Support Center in the Commons*. A virtual meeting will follow on Thursday, March 4, 2027 for those who could not join us in person. Interpreters for French and Spanish speakers will be available, and interpreters for other languages may be available by request with [the form linked here](#).



DEPARTMENT SPOTLIGHT

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

At Henry County Schools, we believe strong schools are built through strong partnerships with families and our community. Families play an important role in helping students feel connected, supported, and successful. Throughout the school year, we will continue to share resources, opportunities, and supports available to students and families.

You Belong in Henry County Schools!

This school year, Henry County Schools is excited to launch our **You Belong Campaign**, led by our Mental Health and Wellness Facilitators. The campaign is designed to help create school communities where every student, staff member, and family feels valued, connected, and that they belong. Each month, we will focus on a different dimension of belonging and intentionally highlight ways our schools can strengthen relationships, connection, and support.

Our 2026–2027 You Belong Monthly Focuses:

- **August** — Welcomed
- **September** — Present
- **October** — Supported
- **November** — Needed
- **December** — Accepted
- **January** — Invited
- **February** — Loved
- **March** — Heard
- **April** — Befriended
- **May** — Known

Throughout the year, we invite our families to join us in this important work. Look for monthly activities, messages, and opportunities that highlight each focus and reinforce a simple but powerful message: **You Belong Here.**

Together, we can help ensure that every student knows they are seen, valued, supported, and connected within our Henry County Schools community. Because when families and schools work together, every student has a greater opportunity to thrive.

You belong.
Your voice matters.
Your partnership matters.



Click image to make larger

To learn more about the HCS Mental Health & Wellness Program, please visit our page at https://bit.ly/HCS_MHW

ELEMENTARY ELA

3 Quick Strategies for Families

1. Find the Base Word

Ask your child to look for a smaller, familiar word inside the larger word.

Example: The word *helpful* contains the base word *help*. The word *replaying* contains the base word *play*.

Ask: "What smaller word do you recognize?"

2. Look at the Prefix

A prefix is added to the beginning of a word and changes its meaning.

Examples:

un means not, as in *unhappy*

re means again, as in *reread*

pre means before, as in *preview*

Ask: "How does the prefix change the meaning of the base word?"

3. Use the Suffix as a Clue

A suffix is added to the end of a word. It can change the meaning of the word or show how the word is used in a sentence.

Examples:

ful means full of, as in *helpful*

less means without, as in *careless*

er can mean a person who does something, as in *teacher*

Ask: "What does the suffix tell you about the word?"

Building Content Vocabulary at Home: Unlocking Big Words in Kindergarten Through Grade 5



As children grow as readers, they encounter new vocabulary in science, social studies, math, and English language arts. Families can help children understand unfamiliar words by teaching them to look for familiar word parts. Many words are built using prefixes at the beginning, roots or base words in the middle, and suffixes at the end. Recognizing these parts helps children determine the meaning of new words across all subjects.

Try This at Home: Next time your student is reading, ask them: "Can you break that word into two smaller parts? What part do you already recognize?" Allow them to use this cheat sheet.

FAMILY WORD-DECODER CHEAT SHEET

Word Part	Type	Meaning	Examples
un	Prefix	Not	unkind, unhappy, unsafe
re	Prefix	Again	reread, rewrite, rebuild
pre	Prefix	Before	preview, preheat, pretest
bio	Root	Life	biology, biosphere
graph	Root	Write or draw	paragraph, graphic, autograph
ful	Suffix	Full of	helpful, careful, joyful
less	Suffix	Without	hopeless, careless, fearless
able	Suffix	Able to be	washable, predictable, enjoyable

SECONDARY ELA

3 Quick Strategies for Families

1. Look for the "Root" Core

- When your teen hits a massive word in a textbook, ask them to find the base word inside it.
- Example: In biodiversity (biology), the root bio means life. In chronological (history), chron means time.

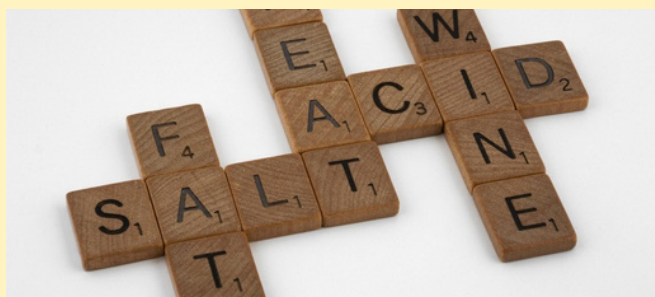
2. Spot the Prefix Direction

- Prefixes change the direction or condition of a word.
- Try this: If they see un-, dis-, or non-, it means not or opposite. If they see inter-, it means between (e.g., international or interact). Ask: "What is this prefix doing to the main word?"

3. Use the Suffix to Find the Clue

- Suffixes usually tell you what role the word plays in a sentence.
- Example: Words ending in -ology mean the study of (geology, biology). Words ending in -tion or -sion show an action or state of being (extinction, revolution).

Building Content Vocabulary at Home: Unlocking Big Words



As students progress through middle and high school, the reading material in science, social studies, math, and English becomes increasingly complex. High schoolers encounter hundreds of new academic words each year. You don't need to be a dictionary to help your teen—you just need to help them look for word parts!

Most academic words are built like puzzle pieces using prefixes (at the beginning), roots (the core meaning), and suffixes (at the end). When teens learn to spot these pieces, they can unlock the meaning of unfamiliar words across any subject.

FAMILY WORD-DECODER CHEAT SHEET

Word Part	Type	Meaning	Common Academic Examples
bio-	Prefix/Root	Life	Biology, biosphere, biodegradable
geo-	Prefix/Root	Earth	Geography, geometry, geothermal
graph / gram	Root	Write or Draw	Paragraph, diagram, biography
sub-	Prefix	Under / Below	Subterranean, subheading, subtract
-logy	Suffix	Study of	Pathology, ecology, psychology
-able / -ible	Suffix	Able to be	Adaptable, divisible, predictable

Try This at Home: Next time your student is reading, ask them: "Can you break that word into two smaller parts? What part do you already recognize?"



NEW GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR INCOMING 9TH GRADERS

Henry County Board of Education has developed new graduation requirements for students entering ninth grade in 2024-2025 and subsequent school years. These requirements were inspired by Henry County Schools' vision to ensure a high-quality, world-class education for every student and its mission to empower all students with exceptional opportunities and access that lead to success in a global society.



What's Next

- Additional details will be provided at the school level regarding the impact of new graduation requirements on the upcoming school year.
- Begin to consider what World Languages, CTAE Pathways, or Fine Arts offerings your student may be interested in taking.
- Begin to explore what Community Service opportunities may interest your student.

* Pathway completion in either is recommended
 ** Can be completed with ROTC I, II, or III

Board Policy IHF:
Graduation Requirements





COMMUNITY SERVICE GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

(Class of 2028 and Beyond)

Henry County Schools is proud to empower every student with exceptional opportunities and access that prepare them for success in a global society and inspire them to give back through service to the Henry County community.

School-Based Community Service Hours Opportunities

Not limited to the following opportunities

Civic and Community Based Activities	Faith-based Activities <i>*Not limited to any faith*</i>	School-sponsored activities through official athletic and extracurricular activities
• <u>American Cancer Society</u> (Relay for Life) • <u>American Heart Association</u> • <u>American Red Cross</u> • <u>Atlanta Children's Shelter</u> • <u>Atlanta Community Food Bank</u> • <u>Atlanta Zoo Volunteer Program</u> • <u>Chastain Park Conservancy</u> • <u>Connecting Henry</u> • <u>Fernbank</u> • Geranium Festival • <u>Girls on the Run</u> • <u>Girl Scouts / Boy Scouts</u> of America • <u>Goodwill Industries</u> • <u>Habitat for Humanity</u> • <u>Hands On Atlanta</u> • <u>HCSO Foundation</u> • <u>Helping in Name Ministries, Inc.</u> • <u>Henry County 4H</u> • Henry County Libraries • Henry County Parks & Rec • Henry County Public Schools Foundation • <u>Hosea Feeds the Hungry</u> • <u>Kiwanis</u> • <u>Medshare</u> • <u>Operation Lunchbox</u> • <u>Toys for Tots</u> • <u>Trees Atlanta</u> • <u>United Way</u>	• Administrative support • Sunday school teacher • Youth group activities • Youth leader/Children's ministry • Feeding the homeless • Collecting or distributing food and/or clothing items • Creative arts/Worship ministry • Tech/AV support • Workshops • Mission work/trips • Camp leaders • Summer camp • Holiday and special event volunteer • Music and Arts • Usher • Greeter • Parking lot/security • Public relations: website • Community service projects • Fitness support • Mentoring • Various volunteer opportunities	• Advisory Councils (Athletic Council, School Counseling, Superintendent Council) • Ambassadors • Creating/designing bulletin boards • Care packages for military, homeless, etc. • Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO) • Clubs • Student Government Association (SGA) • Managers (Athletics & Fine Arts) • PTO/PTA • Peer Tutoring (School sponsored) • Honor Society/Beta Club activities • Seals (International Skills Diploma Seal (min. 20 hours), Leadership Skills Career Seal (min. 40 hours), Distinguished Leadership Skills Seal (min. 80 hours) • Special Olympics • Youth Leadership Henry

Please click [HERE](#) for more information

NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

October 19th - 23rd, 2026

Join us in celebrating safety! Remind all students about the importance of safety on and around school buses. We will be wearing different colors each day of the week to represent different safety rules on the bus.

WEAR RED

Respect the Stop.
Monday, October 19



WEAR GREEN

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20
Stay at least 12 feet away
from the school bus.



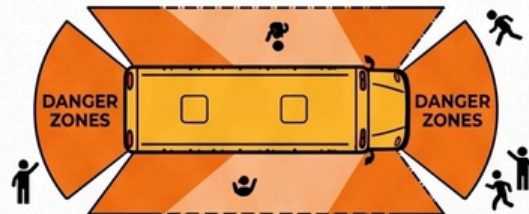
WEAR BLUE

Wednesday, October 21
Quiet at the Railroad.
Stop, Look, and Listen.



WEAR ORANGE

Thursday, October 22
Respect the "Danger Zones."
Know where they are.



WEAR PINK

Friday, October 23
Appreciation Day for Bus Drivers,
Monitors, and Transportation Staff.



Thank you for supporting the Henry County Schools Transportation Services mission to provide the safest, most effective, and dependable school bus transportation.

Henry County Schools Transportation Services

UPCOMING EVENT



**National
Civics Bee®**
by the U.S. Chamber of
Commerce Foundation



2026-2027 COMPETITION

Calling all 6th, 7th, and 8th Graders!

Lead change and lift your community! Share an idea that could strengthen your school or community and compete for major prizes—including a \$100,000* National Championship prize.

HOW TO ENTER

Submit a personally written, four-paragraph essay (500–750 words) addressing these four prompts:

1. IMAGINE

One change—big or small—that would make life better in your school or community. Share your idea and its positive impact.

2. DESCRIBE

How you would bring your idea to life. Explain how to build trust, understand viewpoints, and collaborate.

3. FIND

Support to help bring your idea to life. Who could help you, and how would they contribute?

4. CONNECT

Your idea to the values that shaped our country. How does it reflect our Founding Principles and Civic Virtues?

PRIZES*

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

1st Place: \$100,000*

(529 plan contribution)

2nd Place: \$25,000* | 3rd Place: \$15,000*

GEORGIA STATE FINALS

1st Place: \$1,000* + Trip to D.C.

2nd Place: \$500* | 3rd Place: \$250*

REGIONAL BEE

1st Place: \$500* Minimum

2nd Place: \$250* | 3rd Place: \$125*

** Amounts shown are anticipated minimums to be awarded. All amounts are cash prizes except as indicated above. Finalists for each round should reference their respective Contest Rules for full prize information.*

IMPORTANT LOCAL DATES

School Essay Deadline:
Friday, January 29, 2027

Download the 2027 Essay
Application Guide for full
instructions and helpful tips.



Interested in Participating?

Speak with your **social studies teacher** to get started and submit your essay!

For general competition information and rules, visit Nationalcivicsbee.org

UPCOMING EVENT

ATTENTION 6TH – 12TH GRADE STUDENTS & FAMILIES!

Henry County Schools Regional National History Day

Uncover the past. Showcase your passion. Shape the future.



WHAT IS NATIONAL HISTORY DAY?

National History Day (NHD) is a year-long educational program that lets you become the historian! Instead of just reading history, you get to explore topics you care about—from science and technology to arts, sports, and social change.

Choose your favorite project style:

- Documentary** (Video production)
- Exhibit** (Museum-style display)
- Performance** (Dramatic presentation)
- Website** (Interactive web design)
- Paper** (In-depth research essay)

WHY GET EXCITED TO PARTICIPATE?

- Be an Innovator:** Explore this year's theme—*Innovation in History: Impact, Influence, Change*—and bring historic breakthroughs to life!
- Compete & Shine:** Showcase your talent at the regional contest, with opportunities to advance to State and Nationals!
- Build Future Skills:** Master research, critical thinking, creative expression, and presentation skills that boost college & career readiness.
- Work Together or Solo:** Enter as an individual or form a team with friends!



MAJOR DATES FOR STUDENT SUBMISSION

February 5, 2027

by 4:00 PM

Student & Teacher Online Registration Deadline

All students and teachers planning to submit projects MUST complete registration on the ZFair HCS Online platform.

February 26, 2027

by 11:59 PM

Project Submission Deadline

ALL completed student projects participating in the regional contest must be uploaded/submitted on the ZFair HCS Online platform.

READY TO TAKE THE CHALLENGE?

Interested students should contact their social studies teacher today to get started!



| FAMILY SERVICES

FAMILY SERVICES - AT YOUR SERVICE!

The mission of the Office of Family Services is to provide comprehensive multi-service opportunities for all families in a positive and welcoming environment.



From Residency to providing interpretation support through our Language Services Department, the Office of Family Services takes pride in our ability to create a positive onboarding experience for our new Henry County families as well as continuously supporting our schools with their efforts to meet the needs of all of our students and families.

**Family Services is located at the
Henry County Learning and
Support Center**

166 Holly Smith Drive
McDonough, GA 30253
770-957-3945

Hours

Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM



SERVICES OFFERED

- Adult Education/Extended Learning
- Residency
- Employee Choice
- Enrollment Support
- Exchange Student Support
- Hospital Homebound Services
- Language Services
- Migrant Education Support
- Online Registration Kiosks and Support
- School Choice
- School Transfers
- Immunization Requirement Support

TOOLS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

HENRYCONNECTS FAMILY VIEW



One of our core beliefs is that family and community involvement is critical to student success! In an effort to bring classroom resources to your living room, we have developed the HenryConnects Family View. This a one-stop shop developed to strengthen the partnership between home and school. It connects families to school information, tools, and instructional resources specifically tailored to your child’s courses.

An Infinite Campus Parent Portal account is required to access HenryConnects Family View. Don’t have a Parent Portal account? Click the link below to get started!

Scan here to access Infinite Campus



<https://campus.henry.k12.ga.us/campus/portal/parents/henry.jsp>

“Catch the Pace” is a weekly update from Henry County Schools Superintendent Dr. John Pace III on all things happening in Henry. Each week, Dr. Pace recaps various events taking place in HCS, and provides information and updates on topics involving our schools and community. You can “Catch the Pace” by following Henry County Schools on our various social media platforms.



Ways to Connect with Henry County Schools

Facebook



Instagram



Twitter (X)



YouTube





The Henry County Public Schools Foundation suggests the following ways to give for anyone seeking to contribute to an exceptional educational environment for all students and staff in Henry County Schools:

- Online Donations
- Recurring Donations
- Corporate Sponsorships
- Matching Gifts
- Planned Giving
- Fundraising Events
- In-Kind Donations
- Championing Volunteer Opportunities

For more information, contact HCPSF at
HCPSFoundation@henry.k12.ga.us or
(770) 957-6601 (ext. 04190).

LIKE & SHARE

Lets Get Social!



STAY CONNECTED. STAY INFORMED. **MAKE AN IMPACT.**



LIKE US ON
facebook

Henry County
Public Schools Foundation



FOLLOW US ON
instagram

@hcpsfoundation