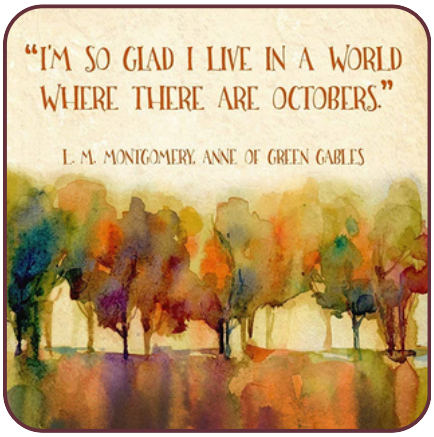
Haddam Killingworth High School
Sept | Oct 2026
Newsletter



From the Principal:

We are off to a fantastic start to the 2026-27 school year! We love the start of school each year as the Cougars come back to "the Den" and their energy fills our classrooms and hallways. As I tell our school community each year at our first day assembly, HKHS is a place of renewal and continuous improvement - both individual and school-wide. Each member of the school community is part of something bigger than themselves at HK, and the tradition of excellence is one that fuels us all. Our new students are settling in and I already see them making connections, enjoying friendships, and joining teams and clubs that add to their HK experience. We absolutely love working with these young people and deeply appreciate your partnership in helping them grow into their full potential.

As you read this first edition of our newsletter, I hope you get a sense of the same positive energy that fills our building each day. Whether you've joined us for Open House, attended an after-school event, or are catching up here, I invite you to share in the enthusiasm and pride that make HKHS such a remarkable place to learn and grow.

As always, the best part of the fall welcome back newsletter is the introduction of new staff members. Please help us to welcome the following to the HKHS team!





Ben Moore [Social Work]: Ben received his BSW from Central Connecticut State University in 2018 and his Master of Social Work from Sacred Heart University in 2020. He has worked as a school social worker for the past five years and is excited to join the HK High School team! Outside of school, Ben enjoys spending time with his family and his German Shepherd and is a self-identified tech enthusiast. He looks forward to getting to know the HK community and supporting its students and families.



Paula Matei-Grysiak: [Science] Paula holds a M.S. in Physics from the University of Bucharest, Romania. During her last year of her Master's degree, she was hired as a Research Assistant at the National Institute for Research and Development in Microtechnology. She then attended Wesleyan University for doctoral studies in Physics and while there, fell in love with teaching. Paula taught in a private high school in Massachusetts and at the college level at Wesleyan University. She then went through the ARC program and became a public school teacher in New Haven. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, skiing, and dancing. Paula is very excited to join the HKHS team!



David Girolamo [Science]: David has been teaching for 25 years and has a passion for science that is part of his everyday life. A lifelong CT resident, David has taught in both private and public schools at both the middle school and high school levels. His goal is to get his students to see the science in the world around them and to spark their curiosity in all things science. David lives with his wife and their black cat "Boo" and they have two adult children. They are a "Disney family" and still enjoy family trips to Disney World several times a year. They are also a big sports family and David coaches football, his daughter coaches gymnastics, and his son plays college football.



Alison Smalley [Main Office Secretary]: Alison joins the main office team bringing over 15 years of experience as an administrative assistant. Having previously worked at another high school, she is particularly excited to be back in a school setting and looks forward to supporting students, staff, and families within our community. Alison is a Connecticut native and graduated from the University of Vermont. She lives in Killingworth with her twin sons and volunteers on the Haddam Killingworth Little League board.



Connor Moran [Math]: Connor attended Eastern Connecticut State University and developed a joy for math while working as a tutor in the university library. He combined this with his joy for working with children that he discovered while working at the Deer Lake Day Camp. He has been teaching math to high schoolers for the last five years at the Grove School then at Morgan High School in Clinton where he grew up and currently lives. Connor believes that anyone can be a "math person" so long as they work to build confidence and are willing to make mistakes. He is excited to be a member of the HK team and have an amazing year!



Craig Wall: [Long Term Substitute - English]: With over 16 years of classroom experience in just about every grade level and a corporate background in journalism and public relations, Craig will be serving as a long-term substitute at HKHS. He is a graduate of New Mexico State University and earned a master's degree from UConn. From the Zuni Native Reservation, to the rural mountains of Portugal, to the jungles of Costa Rica, to the fast-paced world of NYC, Craig has led a full and rich life of experience and culture that he loves to share with students. His favorite book is *The Catcher in the Rye* with *Parrot In The Oven* as a close second. Craig is also an accomplished musician who plays four instruments, sings, writes, records, and performs. He is the proud father to a brilliant 22-year-old UConn senior, Daelen.

WE'RE SO GLAD TO HAVE YOU ON THE HKHS TEAM!

GRADE CHECKS!

We've entered the second half of Quarter 1 for the school year. Progress reports were made available via PowerSchool on the afternoon of Friday, September 25th however you can log into your **PowerSchool Parent Portal** account at any time to check your student's grades. If you have questions regarding grades, assignments, or other classroom-specific issues, please reach out to the teacher(s) in questions. The format for teacher email addresses is FirstInitialLastName@rsd17.org.

REMINDER: If you do not have a Parent Portal account through PowerSchool, please reach out to counseling secretary Amy Giarnella at agiarnella@rsd17.org for instructions on how to set one up. You will need the RSD17 district code which is **WCTZ** + your student's Access ID and Access Password.



NEW TO RSD 17... ParentSquare!

As you've already seen and heard, RSD17 is now utilizing **ParentSquare** for communication with families as a replacement for SchoolMessenger. Whereas SchoolMessenger is primarily used only for mass notifications, ParentSquare is an all-in-one platform that combines district-level alerts, school-level notifications, classroom messaging, secure document sharing, appointment scheduling, and much more!



As part of this rollout, HKHS will be switching from PickATime to ParentSquare for our upcoming Parent/Teacher Conferences scheduled for Wednesday, October 21st & Thursday, October 22nd.

Teachers will send out messages directly to parents and guardians through ParentSquare with their availability in 10 minutes slots. They will be doing so by class so you will only receive a message if your student has that teacher. Both in-person and virtual time slots will be available on **October 21st from 12:35pm to 4:05pm and October 22nd from 5:00pm to 8:00pm.** Please note that both days are ½ days for students and PSATs will be taking place on Wednesday the 21st as well.

School Day PSATs ~ OCTOBER 21st

Students in grades 9-11 will be taking the PSATs, the official College Board practice SAT. Freshmen will complete the PSAT 8/9, while sophomores and juniors will complete the PSAT NMSQT. **All students will need to bring their fully charged school-issued Chromebook, as well as their computer charger, on exam day.**

Lunch will be served after testing and then students will be dismissed at 11:55am for the buses. Students in 12th grade will remain home to work on post-secondary planning. If your senior student is not sure what they need to do on October 21st, they should go to **https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/** and explore the career, college, and/or scholarship opportunities available there. College Board has revamped this resource to provide excellent resources for students pursuing both the workforce or college after high school.

HOCO

HOMECOMING is scheduled for Friday, November 20th @ 7pm

Come join us for another legendary Homecoming Dance here at HKHS with a theme of **Old NYC ~ Broadway**! The DJ will keep the night going and there will be a **photo booth**, concessions, and good company! Tickets are $10 each. All attendees AND their guests should bring a photo ID.

Any HKHS students looking to bring a non-HKHS guest, must bring a fully completed Guest Information Sheet that includes a copy of their guest's photo ID (with their DOB listed) to Mr. Hagewood in room C201 no later than Thursday, November 5th. Copies of this form are available in the main office.

As a reminder, students must be present at school for ***at least* 5 hours** in order to attend after-school activities. Students who do not meet this attendance guideline will be turned away and not allowed to enter.

YEARBOOKS + PICTURE RETAKES



School Picture Day make-ups will take place on **Monday, October 19th** during the Lunch/Activity block. If you previously ordered photos to be delivered to the school, those should have all been distributed as well as student IDs. If your student is looking for their photos or ID, please have them visit Mrs. Coppola in the library.

The 2026-2027 yearbook is on sale now!

We have transitioned to a new supplier for our yearbook and are happy to report the purchase cost per book has been reduced. While the digital store-front is a simple interface with less hype, the photo, print, and production quality of the book will be identical to past years at the reduced price point. **Take advantage of Incentive Pricing through the end of October @ $60 each!** Standard Pricing starts in November until March @ $65 each.

Please note that **Senior Ad Pricing** is also reduced from previous years and will remain fixed through February. Ad pricing will not increase, but ad sales do end before book orders close so don't delay! All yearbook sales will be BY ORDER ONLY. There will be very few extras printed and when they are gone, they are gone.

As always, thank you for supporting the HKHS Yearbook and keep your eyes open for opportunities to contribute candid photos from sports and events. ***Help us make the most dynamic book possible!***

To order a yearbook, place a senior dedication, or order a sponsor ad, please scan the QR code or click the link below:

https://shop.yearbookmarket.com/haddamkillingworthhighschool

ATTENTION SENIORS!



Cap & gown measurements + the senior class photo will be taken on Wednesday, Oct 28th. All information related to senior activities such as cap & gown measurements, class photo, yearbook submissions for quotes/candids, etc. are posted in the Class of 2027 Google Classroom so **seniors should check it often as the year goes on!**

DROP-IN HELP SESSIONS have started with counselors on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, & Fridays during 1st lunch. Any students with questions about post-secondary planning should stop by to speak with a counselor. This includes questions about college and the application process, career opportunities, military recruitment, or anything else!

SPEAKING OF GRADUATION...

Our final day of school is **tentatively** scheduled for Thursday, June 10th but **only if we do NOT have any snow days** (which, this being New England, is extremely unlikely). **Please be mindful when booking vacations that our final exam schedule, final day of school, and the date of graduation are likely to change.** Vacations should NOT be booked until the schedule is finalized in April because final exams may not be moved.

Please also note that the entirety of graduation day should be reserved for the ceremony. The Board of Education will solidify the actual date in late spring but the ceremony itself may start at any point between 10am to 7pm – dependent on the weather. Administration reserves the right to adjust the timing of graduation through the final week of school. A last-minute change in timing may mean the ceremony could be held outside in the morning for example, instead of having to be moved indoors. ***Please keep this in mind when planning traveling arrangements for friends & family as well!***

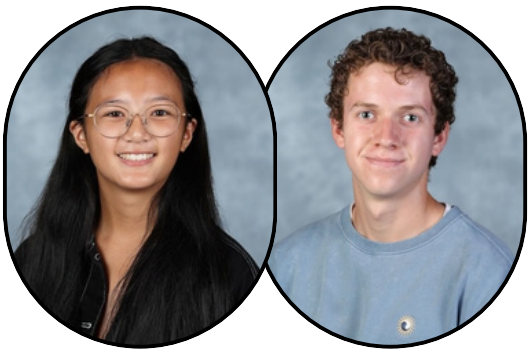
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and Speaking of Seniors...

HKHS is proud to announce two of our seniors have been named as **Commended Students in the 2027 National Merit Scholarship Program!**

The mission of National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) is to recognize and honor the academically talented students of the United States. NMSC accomplishes its mission by conducting nationwide academic scholarship programs. The enduring goals of NMSC's scholarship programs are:

- *To promote a wider and deeper respect for learning in general and for exceptionally talented individuals in particular*
- *To shine a spotlight on brilliant students and encourage the pursuit of academic excellence at all levels of education*
- *To stimulate increased support from individuals and organizations that wish to sponsor scholarships for outstanding scholastic talent*



CONGRATULATIONS TO CHLOE & BRODY!

Commended Students placed among the top 50,000 students in the country who entered the 2027 competition by taking the PSAT/NMSQT exam. **Roughly 1.2 to 1.3 MILLION students meet the requirements to enter each year which means Commended Students are in the top 4%!**

"Those being named Commended Students have demonstrated outstanding potential for academic success," commented a spokesperson for NMSC. "These students represent a valuable national resource; recognizing their accomplishments, as well as the key role their schools play in their academic development, is vital to the advancement of educational excellence in our nation. We hope that this recognition will help broaden their educational opportunities and encourage them as they continue their pursuit of academic success."

2nd annual

KINDERGARTEN & SENIOR LEGACY WALK 2026

Please join us in a meaningful moment as seniors prepare to graduate and Kindergartners begin their educational journey.

When: Friday, October 9th, 2026

Time: Arrive @ HKHS 5:30pm, 5:45pm Line up on track endzones, walk beginning promptly at 6:00pm

Where: HKHS Football Field
(before the HKFB v Morgan Football Game.)

Kindergarten students accompanied by a parent from BURR/KES, and HK Seniors will walk toward one another, meeting at the 50 yard line. Seniors will welcome Kinders to the district and pass along a small gift, wishing them success on their educational journey.

Kinder students and their families, along with the parents of senior students will enter the game at no charge. Please state you are family of Legacy Walk.



A moment from our Inaugural Walk (2025)

Kindergarten parents contact awilcox@rsd17.org with any questions.
Senior students contact twilcox@rsd17.org with any questions.

The HKHS football team is off to a hot start (2-0) with wins over Cromwell (*for the 1st time in 16 years!*) and Oxford (*1st CT High School Football Alliance win!*). The team will be hosting the Morgan/Saybrook/Westbrook Co-op on Friday, Oct 9th. Our 2nd annual **HK Legacy Walk** will be taking place before that game that evening and our **Youth Night** event will take place on November 6th.

The team will also be honoring the late Thomas Grasso at our home "Veterans Game" on November 13th in honor of Veterans Day on November 11th. Thomas was a student athlete, special education teacher, football coach, and mentor in the HK community prior to leaving his teaching career to serve in the Army after the September 11th terrorists attack.



The football team has also been working with the youth flag football team on Saturday mornings. They have been leading their drills, coaching, and mentoring the co-ed flag team comprised of kindergarten & 1st grade players.



The HKHS Drama Club is pleased to announce its fall drama production will be…A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM!

Performances will take place on **Thursday, Nov 5th and Saturday, Nov 7th** in the HKHS auditorium at 7pm.



Come support our talented student cast & crew for an evening of live theater that promises to entertain!

Tickets are on sale and you can purchase them electronically by scanning the QR code here or using this link to visit the HKHS GoFan ticket page: https://gofan.co/app/school/CT17399. Tickets will also be available at the door!





Support HKHS Band & Choir Students

Please support our band and choir students as they fundraise for their upcoming music trip to New York City in spring of 2027! During their trip, students will participate in an adjudicated music competition alongside music students from schools across the country. They'll enjoy some exciting NYC experiences including a delicious meal at Gayle's Broadway Rose (home of the singing waiters), a Broadway show, a boat ride to the Statue of Liberty, a visit to the Museum of Broadway and much, much more!

Raising Joy Double Good

Double Good Popcorn Fundraiser

Sales began: October 2 at 6PM | **Sales end: October 9 at 6PM**

You can shop directly through a student's individual Double Good Popcorn Store, or use **THIS LINK** to purchase popcorn and let us know which student you would like your purchase to support (otherwise purchases will benefit the music department in general). All ordering is done online, and your products ship directly to you!

Thank you for supporting our HKHS musicians and helping make this exciting experience possible!

Fall Into The Habit of Donating Blood!

The HKHS Student Council members will be holding their fall blood drive on Friday, October 30th. This event is open to all students who are at least 16 (***please note: 16-year old students can participate with parent/guardian permission**, students who are 17-years old+ do not need a permission slip*) and RSD17 staff. Students can sign up with Mr. Hagewood in C201.

The American Red Cross has a critical need for blood donors and patients need you this fall. Visit www.redcrossblood.org/ to find a blood drive near you. Give blood by October 18th and they'll send you a $15 e-gift card to the merchant of your choice.



HKHS Co-Curricular Fair Gets Kids Involved!

HKHS is proud to offer almost 40 different co-curricular clubs for the 2026-2027 school year! Students visited the fieldhouse on September 23rd for our yearly co-curricular fair where students learned about the various clubs & organizations available for them to join.



Upperclassmen hosted tables for the Cougar Chronicle, Morgan's Message, Current Events Club, Film Society, Math League, Environmental Club, Women In STEM, Science Olympiad, Finance Club, "The Book Was Better", & more!



Culinary Classes are HOT STUFF!

The culinary classes have truly hit the ground running! The Advanced Culinary students are starting their first project, focusing on Italian dishes, while the Beginners have been busy building their teamwork and time-management skills. They have also been practicing baking, flipping crepes, and so much more. It has been a busy and exciting start to the year, and it has been wonderful to see the students learning, working together, and gaining confidence in the kitchen!

Tune in to WTNH Channel 8 on October 23rd from 9–10am! The Kitchen Segment will be featuring Ali Dooley and some delicious fall treats!



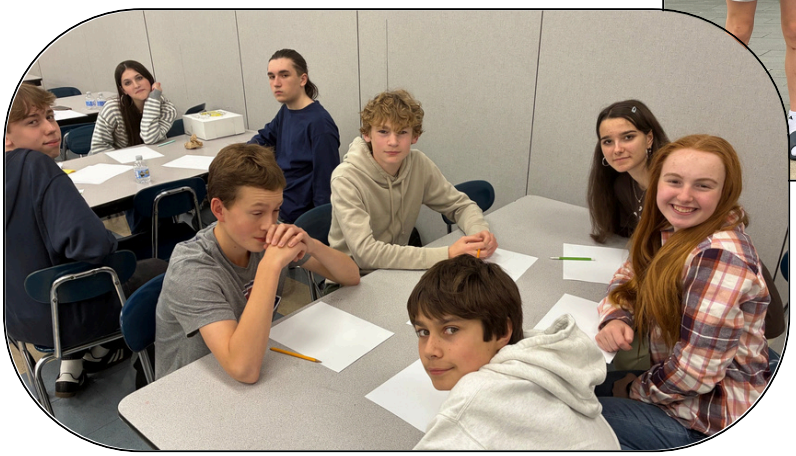
Killingworth True Value
Our passion. Our mission.
How can we help you today?

The HKHS Technology Education department, would like to thank **Killingworth True Value** for their generous donation to the HKHS Technology department. True Value donated ***over 20 boxes*** of hardware and supplies ranging from electrical, to plumbing, to home improvement items. These items will be used in student projects and learning for years to come. ***Thanks to Killingworth True Value for their generosity!***

Math Team Continues to COUNT THEIR WINS

The HKHS Math Team is off to a strong start this year with our Varsity Team bringing home **1st PLACE at their first meet of the season!** Pictured here, post win, in front of Guilford High School is (left-to-right) Owen Voegtli, Dylan Brown, Bruce Peese, Coach Cropper-Alt, Tyler Medina, Alexandre Harlow, Matt Medina, & Emma Castiglioni.





Our JV Team recruited 4 new teammates this year and **won 2nd PLACE at their first meet** as well! They are pictured here getting ready for the team round at recent the Xavier meet. At the back table (l-to-r) is Shane Tucker, Sylvia Peese, and Desi Harris. In the foreground (l-to-r) is Alexandre Harlow, Owen Voegtli, Alyssa McCue, Ryland Harvey, & Ethan Ruth.

Math Honor Society Welcomes 2026 Inductees

The HKHS chapter of the National Math Honor Society ***Mu Alpha Theta*** inducted **NINETEEN new members** on Friday, September 25th during a morning ceremony held in the cafeteria. This brings our total membership to 32 students. Considering the HKHS chapter of *Mu Alpha Theta* was only established two years ago, we consider this growth to be phenomenal!

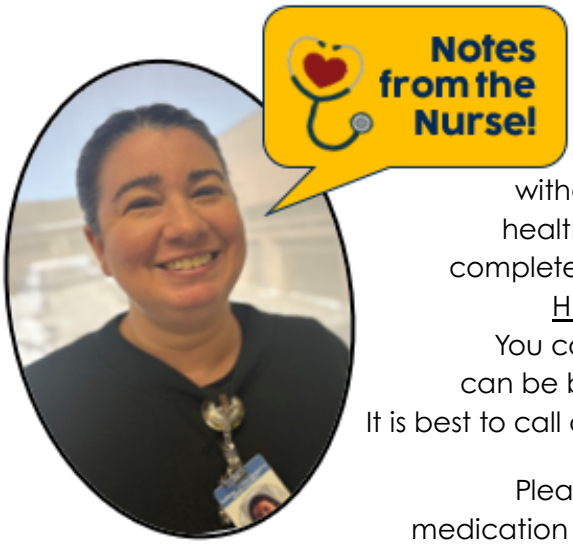


Members were chosen for their outstanding academic achievement, their upstanding character, and their desire to inspire a passion for mathematics. Advisor Mrs. Bagnoli took over the reigns this year after the retirement of longtime teacher Mrs. Wendy Adamczyk. Mrs. Bagnoli, along with both new and old members, are looking forward to outreach events such as peer tutoring and the annual Pi-Day Pi-walk.

MEDIA DAY! with Steady PHOTOGRAPHY

Our fall sports teams participated in a **Media Day** experience with [John Steady Photography] recently and the results are amazing! Contact individual head coaches if you are interested in purchasing photos.





Medication Authorization Forms

Students should **not** be in possession of medications *(including over-the-counter medications and/or inhalers)* without a medication authorization form filled out and submitted to the health office. Please work with your healthcare provider to have this form completed,if applicable. Forms can be brought in by the student, emailed to HKHSNurse@rsd17.org, or faxed to 860-345-4741 by the doctor's office. You can access a copy here: **Medication Authorization Form**. Medications can be brought to the health office, by an adult, between 7:20am - 2:20pm. It is best to call ahead to confirm Nurse Hartel is available to accept them however.

Please reach out to Mrs. Hartel, school nurse, with any health updates or medication changes that may affect students' school day. She's here to partner with you to ensure students remain healthy and safe throughout the day.



OCTOBER IS HEALTH LITERACY MONTH!

Health Literacy Month was established in 1999 to raise awareness about making health information easy to understand and the health care system easier to navigate. The healthcare system is complex, medical terminology and jargon can be confusing, and appointments can be short.

According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, only 12% of U.S. adults have "proficient" health literacy skills. Health literacy includes things like knowing where to go for help, finding trusted medical information, understanding health information, making health care decisions, reading medication labels, and following treatment plans. Having lower health literacy can lead to poorer health outcomes.

Teens are at a great developmental point in their lives to start taking a leading role in their health. They will likely need some support navigating the healthcare system. Included below is a checklist of healthcare ownership activities that students can work on with their adults. Also, "***Ask Me Three***" is a healthcare initiative coordinated by the **Institute for Healthcare Improvement** that is designed to improve communication between patients and medical providers. Asking these questions at every nurse or doctors visit helps you walk away feeling confident, informed, and an advocate in your own care. Click here for the **Owning Your Own Health Checklist**.







HKTV is back!

Our student crew has hit the ground running—learning equipment, taking on production roles, and creating new end-of-show videos.

Mon & Fri ~ 8:14am &
Tues - Thurs ~ 8:34am

CLICK HERE to catch the latest HKTV Morning News and see our students in action!



Intro to Multimedia students are stepping into the TV studio as well to produce their very own **Cougar Den Talk Show**! From hosting to interviewing to cameras, audio, and directing, students are getting hands-on experience bringing a studio show to life.

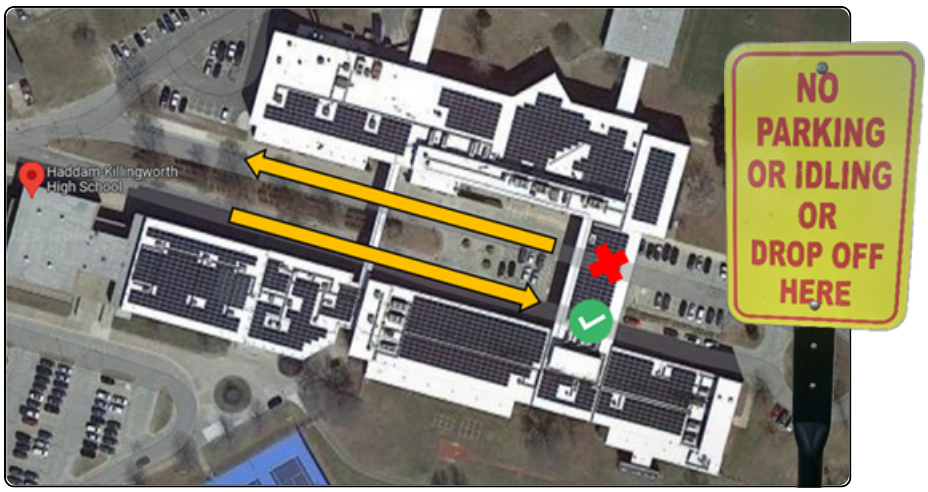
SAFETEY FIRST!

National School Bus Safety Week is right around the corner from October 19th-23rd

National School Bus Safety Week is an annual, week-long campaign by the National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) that is held during the third full week of October to promote safety for the millions of children who ride school buses daily. It is a collaborative effort involving parents/guardians, students, teachers, and motorists to encourage safe behavior around school buses, **such as properly stopping for buses.**

"School bus safety doesn't stop when the week ends." Explore year-round school bus safety resources and tips from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) by clicking HERE!

We'd also like to remind everyone that students should only be dropped off from the right driveway, *as you pull in and are closest to the fieldhouse - as indicated with a green checkmark.* ***Neither adults nor students should stop on the auditorium side of the driveway*** *– as indicated with a red X.*



Comments from the Cafe!

Please make sure your student knows that **ALL** students can access **FREE breakfast** every morning here at HKHS!

Even if your student isn't a big fan of breakfast, they can always stop by and grab a snack to have later in the day.

REMINDER: Students are asked to place their lunch order each day so the cafeteria staff can properly supply the options most in demand.

Monthly menus for both breakfast and lunch, as well as **Lunch Order Forms**, can be found on the [Home & Info page] of the HKHS website.

Breakfast: $0.00 + Lunch: $4.75



Free & Reduced Program ~ Oct 13th Deadline ~

According to the CT Dept of Education, thousands of children across Connecticut participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) **Child Nutrition Programs** each day, receiving meal benefits that make an important contribution to their overall nutrition and academic success.

One of those programs is the **Free & Reduced-Price Meals Program** that supplies students in need with free or reduced priced meals along with many other benefits. Many families are "directly certified" into this program because they receive SNAP, TANF, and/or HUSKY Health/Medicaid benefits. Families can also apply to join the program by completing a very simple application.

This is an annual program however and an important deadline is approaching on October 13th. All students who were part of the plan for the 2025-2026 school year "carried over" and are covered for the first 30 days of the new school year. **This "carryover" coverage ends on October 13th.** If you are unsure if your student(s) will remain part of the program after that date, please contact Amy Giarnella at agiarnella@rsd17.org as soon as possible.

For any questions regarding the Free & Reduced Program, or to request copies of the application and other documents, please email agiarnella@rsd17.org. More information on all things Food Services **can be found here** on the RSD17 website. Suggestions and comments are always welcome and can be directed to RSD17 Food Services Director Sharon Shuttleworth at sshuttleworth@rsd17.org.





MARK YOUR CALENDARS



- **2nd Annual Legacy Walk** | Friday, Oct 9nd @ 5:30pm
- **Indigenous Peoples' Day / Columbus Day** | Monday, Oct 12th – ***District closed!***
- **Shoreline Music Festival** | Wednesday, Oct 14th @ 7pm – North Branford High School
- **ACTs** | Saturday, Oct 17th [non-HKHS event]
- **School Picture Retake Day** | Monday, Oct 19th
- **CHESLA Financial Aid Night** | Monday, Oct 19th @ 6pm
  - *Parents/guardians of all grades welcome!*
- **School Day PSATs** | Wednesday, Oct 21st – *Early dismissal for students!*
- **Parent/Teacher Conferences** ~ ***NOW THROUGH PARENTSQUARE!***
  - Wednesday, Oct 21st from 12:35pm to 4:05pm – *Early dismissal for students!*
  - Thursday, Oct 22nd from 5pm to 8pm – *Early dismissal for students!*
- **Cap & Gown Measurements + Senior Group Photo** | Wednesday, Oct 28th [during Advisory]
- **Quarter 1 Ends** | Thursday, Oct 29th
- **Student Council Fall Blood Drive** | Friday, Oct 30th
- **Election Day + Professional Development Day** | Tuesday, Nov 3rd – *No school for students!*
- **Fall Drama Show "A Midsummer Night's Dream"** | Thursday, Nov 5th & Saturday, Nov 7th @ 7pm
  - *Buy tickets HERE:* ***https://gofan.co/app/school/CT17399***
- **SATs** | Saturday, Nov 7th[non-HKHS event]
- **Veterans Day** | Wednesday, Nov 11th – ***District closed!***
- **Homecoming!** | Friday, Nov 20th @ 7pm – HKHS Cafeteria
- **Southern Region Music Auditions** | Saturday, Nov 21st @ Foran High School
- **Principal's Cup** | Tuesday, Nov 24th @ 6:30pm vs. Valley/Old Lyme
- **Thanksgiving Break**
  - ½ day on Wednesday, Nov 25th – *Students dismissed @ 11:55am*
  - District closed on Thursday, Nov 26th & Friday, Nov 27th
- **Girls Basketball, Wrestling, & Hockey Seasons Begin** | Monday, Nov 30th
- **8th Grade Band Day** | Tuesday, Dec 1st [SNOW DATE of Wednesday, Dec 2nd]
- **Winter Sports Begin [all others]** | Thursday, Dec 3rd
- **Quarter 2 Progress Reports** | Thursday, Dec 3rd
- **Winter Chorus Concert** | Thursday, Dec 3rd @ 6pm [SNOW DATE of Friday, Dec 4th]
- **SATs** | Saturday, Dec 5th [non-HKHS event]
- **Professional Development Day** | Tuesday, Dec 8th – *Early dismissal for students!*
- **Winter Band Concert** | Thursday, Dec 10th @ 6pm [SNOW DATE of Friday, Dec 11th]

Visit the **Calendars** tab on the RSD17 website for all details on HKHS events!
https://www.rsd17.org/calendar/hkhs-calendar

As always, we look forward to seeing you at our school events and around campus.
Thank you so much for all you do to support our students!

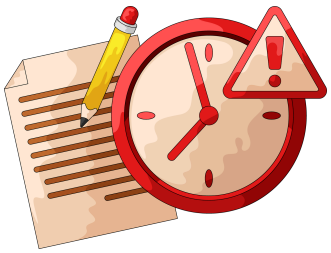
Respectfully,

Donna L. Hayward,
Principal

◦ Guidance Counseling Dept Update ◦

Post-Secondary Planning In Progress

High school counselors are currently working with our seniors on post-secondary planning. We met with students in Advisory over the first two weeks of the school year and followed up the student presentation with an event on September 14th which was geared towards families. **That presentation can be found here**. Students may also pick up copies of the handouts that were distributed that evening by stopping by the counseling office. School counselors have begun individual meetings with seniors as well. Each student will meet with their school counselor over the coming weeks, and we are always available for drop-in questions.



Seniors with early application deadlines (10/15, 11/1, or 11/15) should be actively working on their applications, including their personal essay. They should have already communicated with any teacher(s) from whom they would like a letter of recommendation. Please note that students must complete their Candidate Biography Form Google Doc that is posted in the Class of 2027 Google Classroom and share with the teacher(s) who are writing a letter of recommendation and their school counselor. This should be done at least one month before their earliest application due date.

*****DROP-IN HOURS ARE ALSO UNDERWAY for any student who would like to discuss, or has questions about, post-secondary planning***.** This applies to seniors with questions about the Common App, juniors who wants to know how to sign up for the SATs, sophomores who are considering the military or want to learn about future career opportunities, or freshmen who don't know where to start. A counselor will be available each day during 1st lunch on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays throughout the school year in the counsling office conference room.

College Reps are in the House!



HKHS is hosting college admissions representatives nearly every day during 1st lunch through mid-November. **This is a great opportunity for seniors to connect with people who work at the colleges they are applying to or are interested in. It's also a great way for juniors to find out more about colleges they are considering.** Students can view a full list of the reps who will be visiting and sign up for specific visits on their homepage in SchooLinks. They can also just drop-in even if they aren't registered. Rep visits reminders are included in morning announcements every day, announced on the overhead speaker at the beginning of the lunch/activity block each day, and the day's visitors are posted at the main office.

FAFSA Completion Graduation Requirement



Starting with the Class of 2027, the State of Connecticut requires completion of the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** as a graduation requirement. All members of the Class of 2027 are required to **either** complete the FAFSA **OR** complete a waiver exempting them from completing the FAFSA in order to graduate from HKHS. The waiver will be shared with members of the Class of 2027 in spring 2027. For additional information about the FAFSA, please watch this **What Is FAFSA®?** video or visit **studentaid.gov/resources**.

Advanced Courses at HKHS

University of Connecticut's enrollment window for Early College Experience (ECE) courses is open now through 11:59 pm on October 16th, 2026. Students enrolled in one or more UConn ECE at HKHS can enroll through UConn at **uconn.dualenroll.com** for college credit for their courses. Please reach out to Emily Baerlein, school counselor and UConn ECE Site Representative at ebaerlein@rsd17.org with any questions.

If your child is enrolled in one or more Advanced Placement (AP) courses, information regarding the spring testing schedule, payment for AP tests, etc. will be sent from the school counseling office in the near future.

Please remember that if your student qualifies for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, you are eligible to have AP & UConn ECE course fees waived *(as well as SAT fees, college application fees, and other charges)*! If you are not sure if your student is on the list or would like additional information, please contact agiarnella@rsd17.org or 860-554-5750. You can also find information on the Free & Reduced Price Lunch Program on the Food Services section of the RSD17 website or by visiting **the Dept of Education section of ct.gov.**

Connecticut Auto-Admit Program



The Connecticut Auto-Admit Program (CAAP) provides direct admission to a number of participating schools in Connecticut. Graduating high school seniors enrolled in Connecticut high schools with 3.0 weighted GPA or higher (HKHS does use weighted GPAs) are eligible upon application for automatic admission to participating colleges or universities. CAAP waives the application fee, student essays, and recommendation letters for applications to participating institutions. Participating institutions are:

Central Connecticut State University, Eastern Connecticut State University, Southern Connecticut State University, Western Connecticut State University, Albertus Magnus College, Goodwin University, Mitchell College, University of Bridgeport, University of Hartford, and University of New Haven

Students can apply to these institutions through the Common App. As they complete the Common Application, they will fill out fields with their home address, graduation date, and weighted GPA. If a student is eligible for CAAP based on that information, they will receive CAAP offers through the Common Application. **Please note, certain programs at participating colleges are not part of CAAP.** As an example, nursing programs typically have their own admissions standards. Visit **www.ct.edu/admission/autoadmit** for more information.

Senior Digital Portfolio

All HKHS students are required to create and present a Senior Digital Portfolio in the spring of their senior year in order to graduate from HKHS. This will serve as the Mastery-Based Diploma Assessment (worth one credit) noted in the "Credit Distribution & Requirements for Graduation" section (page 10) of our **2026-2027 Opportunities Book**.

In order to complete the Portfolio, seniors must be able to demonstrate mastery of the five HKHS Learning Expectations (page 3 of the Opportunities Book). Students will have multiple opportunities in each course they take at HKHS to demonstrate their progress in meeting learning expectations. Learning Expectations Progress Reports will be provided to students and families regularly. Advisory time will also be dedicated every year for students to work on their portfolios. Please visit the Senior Portfolio section of the **School Counseling website** for more information.

College Board Accounts

Some students have been experiencing issues logging into their College Board accounts. **Please note that we do not have any access to student login details for this website and cannot reset passwords or unlock their accounts.** Students should first try to reset their password from home as College Board password reset emails do not always go through on school wi-fi and some students cannot access their personal email accounts on their Chromebooks. If students are unable to reset their password, they must call College Board's customer service line at 866-630-9305 or visit the Account Help section of the website **which can be found here**.

SchooLinks & FERPA

SchooLinks is the college and career planning platform utilized by HKHS (we previously used Naviance). **All parents and guardians with active emails on file with PowerSchool can access SchooLinks.** If you have a Google, Microsoft, or LinkedIn email account on file with PowerSchool, you can opt to log in with that email address. If you have an email address ending in another domain, please click "Forgot Password" and follow the instructions to create a password. You will then be able to access SchooLinks with your email address and password.

Parents and guardians of the Class of 2027 - SchooLinks has an embedded FERPA waiver that must be completed (within the SchooLinks website) by a parent or guardian in order for your student's college application materials to be sent out. Please log in to SchooLinks to complete this waiver as soon as possible but definitely prior to your student's earliest application deadline.

Community Service Guidelines & Opportunities

All HKHS students must earn 30 hours of community service to graduate. The only exception to this requirement is transfer students, for whom the requirement is prorated.

Students can pick up copies of our Community Service Documentation Form in the counseling office and/or download it from the Home & Info tab of our school's website. It is preferred that students hand in completed forms directly to the counseling office in person. Occasionally we receive multiple copies of the same documentation (for example, the student turns in a copy in-person AND a copy is sent to us by the organization for which the student completed the hours AND/OR the parent/guardian emails a copy to the counselor) which can make tracking hours more difficult. To prevent this, it is preferred that students turn hours into our office directly.

Please note that as of 2024, students are now required to earn all 30 hours in order to apply for a parking permit or participate in senior privileges such as senior prom, senior outing, etc. If your student needs ideas of where to volunteer, they can visit the **HK Youth & Family Services website**. HKYFS maintains a regularly updated list of local volunteer opportunities. Many opportunities are date-specific but there are also options available that are ongoing with flexible hours.



Health 1 Class Visits

School counselors visited Health 1 classes on Friday, September 11th for a "**Meet Your School Counselors**" lesson with 9th graders. We explained what the school counseling office has to offer to our students and shared information on school policies. We also had our ninth-grade students log in to SchooLinks and complete the "Find Your Path" onboarding lesson. We look forward to seeing them again during future lessons in Advisory periods later this year!

Contact Information Updates

It is vital that we have accurate demographic and emergency contact information for our students at all times. **Please remember that if there is any change to your phone numbers, email addresses, emergency contacts, etc. we should be notified as soon as possible.** If there is a change to where and/or who the student is physically living with, that is important information for us to have as well. If a change is made to an address within the district, updated proof of residency documents will be required. This would also apply if a secondary address changes from out of district back into the district.

In past years we shared "Student Information" forms each April that listed a student's current contact information from their PowerSchool file. These forms were mailed home and we requested they be returned, with or without any necessary changes. **This practice was discontinued as of this past school year.** In place of it, we shared updated "**Contact Management Information For Your Student**" forms with parents and guardians through ParentSquare on September 25th. If you have not already done so, please sign electronically to indicate you received the email with the attached form. **If any changes are needed to phone numbers, email address, emergency contacts, etc., please submit them via email to HKHSguidance@rsd17.org for processing.**



As a reminder, ALL parents/guardians should each have their own **PowerSchool Parent Portal account**. Logging into your student's account will not provide the same level off access as a Parent Portal account. Any RSD17 parent or guardian can set up an account by visiting https://rsd17.powerschool.com/public/ and clicking the **Create Account** option. This link can also be found in the banner of each school's website labeled "PowerSchool". To complete your account setup, you will need your student's Access ID and Access Password which can be obtained by emailing agiarnella@rsd17.org. Once you have added your student(s), you'll be able to log in at any time to view their schedule, monitor their grades, check their attendance, sign electronic forms, access their lunch balance, and more!

