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PGCPS Express: Introducing Hāpara!

Prince George's County Public Schools sent this bulletin at 10/02/2020 05:05 PM EDT - Escuelas Públicas del Condado de Prince George envió este boletín/anuncio a 10/02/2020 05:05 PM EDT

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October 2, 2020

Get the Scoop

In the News: Hillcrest Heights Principal Offers Advice on Easing COVID-19 Anxiety



Hillcrest Heights Elementary Principal David Brown recently shared with [Education Dive](#) how he implements and improves supports for students, families and staff during this pandemic.

PGCPS Introduces Hāpara Instructional Suite

Starting Friday, Oct. 9, PGCPS will introduce the [Hāpara Instructional Suite](#), a classroom management tool compatible with Google Classroom.

Hāpara allows teachers to deliver instruction tailored to meet individual student needs, keep students safe during online lessons and provide students with ongoing feedback on their work to encourage continuous learning and growth. Teachers will have access to student documents and online activity through their PGCPS-issued accounts, including:

- Visibility into web activity when students are logged in to their school account during instructional hours.
- Real-time access to provide specific guidance and feedback to struggling students.
- A place to engage in classroom work so students can have personalized learning experiences.

In addition, the software encourages organization and time management skills with a Student Dashboard that gathers all digital school work from Google Classroom and Google Drive into one central location.

Language Access & Parent-Teacher Conferences

With parent-teacher conferences approaching, please make note of language access resources to support communication with parents who are not native speakers of English.

PGCPS Interpreter Bank: Video language support on virtual platforms

Professional interpreters are available [by request from schools](#) to support language access on virtual platforms on Parent-Teacher Conference Day (Monday, Oct. 12). Interpreters will be assigned to schools based on availability for a variety of conference structures, including grade-level teams, teacher clusters and designated language-specific Zoom rooms.

Please note that students, family members and other staff are not permitted to interpret for parent meetings, consistent with federal language access regulations.

Language Link: Third-party phone calls or audio bridge on virtual platforms

Staff may also connect with a Language Link interpreter by phone for parent teacher conferences. Follow these [instructions for third-party phone calls](#) to be connected with an interpreter.

Language Link interpreting services can also be bridged to support language access via audio on virtual platforms, such as Zoom, Google Meet, and WebEx for parent teacher conferences. Follow these [instructions to connect audio interpreting services to a virtual platform via conference bridge](#).

For more information, please contact the Office of Interpreting and Translation at interpreter@pgcps.org.

In the Spotlight

Education Partnership Aims to Strengthen Teacher Workforce, Address Classroom Equity

A new collaboration between the **University of Maryland and Prince George's County Public Schools** will create innovative training opportunities for education students, bolster professional development and promote equity across Maryland public schools. The Maryland Professional Development Schools 2025 project is a cooperative effort, supported by a \$2.3 million grant from the state Department of Education. Read more from [Maryland Today](#).

Cheers to our Community Schools Coordinators!

The last week of September is designated as **Community Schools Coordinator Week**. This weeklong celebration acknowledges their efforts to bridge the gap between the school and community in order to help students and families thrive. Check out this [video](#) from our Community Schools Coordinators!

Hispanic Heritage Month



Are you planning a virtual activity for **Hispanic Heritage Month**? Tell us about it at communications@pgcps.org.

Looking for Distance Learning Pros!

Do you have advice on making the most of the distance learning experience with students? Starting next week, we will highlight **distance learning stars** discussing or demonstrating your best practices for teachers and/or families on PGCPS social media for #TeacherTuesday. Videos should be no longer than one minute. Send submissions to communications@pgcps.org.

Nominate a colleague who makes you #PGCPSproud by sending their name, office/school, photo and a brief description (100 words or less) to communications@pgcps.org. Submissions may be edited for length, clarity or grammar.

Benefits Services: Our Focus Is You

Mark Your Calendars: Open Enrollment 2021

Open enrollment for benefits starts Tuesday, October 6 through Thursday, October 22. This is your opportunity to review options and select the benefits that work best for you and your family.

If you do not make changes during open enrollment, your current elections will continue at the 2021 rates except for Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs). To participate in FSAs, you must re-enroll during open enrollment.

Your selected benefits will take effect Friday, January 1 through the end of 2021.

After the enrollment deadline, you will not be able to make changes to your elections unless you experience an IRS-qualified status change, such as marriage, divorce, birth or adoption

of a child, or loss of coverage.

Visit www.pgcps.org/open for the latest information.

Start Saving with Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs)



Did you know **Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs)** offer significant tax savings? As a pre-tax benefit, the money contributed to these accounts is deducted from paychecks before taxes are calculated. In some cases, tax savings can be significant. Use the [FSA calculator](#) to find out how much!

PGCPS offers two FSAs to help save money on medical costs and child care:

- Healthcare Flexible Spending Account – contribute up to \$2,750 per year
- Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account – contribute up to \$2,500 per year if married and filing separate income tax returns, or up to \$5,000 per year if single or married and filing joint income tax returns

Decide how much to contribute to one – or both – FSAs and opt in during open enrollment (Oct. 6-22).

Announcements

COVID-19 Notification Protocols

PGCPS has notification protocols for employees who test (1) positive for COVID-19, (2) need to quarantine due to immediate exposure or (3) need to care for a COVID-infected family member. For details, please visit [Staff Portal](#).

Instructional Tips for Teachers

If your students are unable to access documents or having trouble submitting assignments through Google Classroom, here's a webinar from [T3 Playground: Google Classroom Part 1, Student Experience](#) to ensure a better experience for you and your students.

PGCPS Professional Library is Open



The Professional Library is open on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Bonnie F. Johns Media Center.

Employees can explore the [online library](#) and contact cathe.francoeur@pgcps.org for pick-up or have items mailed to your school. There are also professional eBooks available in [Sora](#) (use county username and password to login).

Submissions Requested: Student Artwork for Hall of Fame Gala Auction

The Excellence in Education Foundation for PGCPS is seeking student artwork for its upcoming [virtual Hall of Fame Gala!](#) Proceeds will be evenly split between student artists and the foundation. Students must [submit artwork and a permission slip](#) by Oct. 12. For details, contact elizabeth.stuart@pgcps.org.

Fall Auto Sale with ESFCU

PGCPS teachers can take advantage of the [fall auto sale](#) with Education Systems Federal Credit Union (ESFCU). You will receive a \$200 cash bonus if you finance or refinance a new or used auto loan with a minimum loan amount of \$15,000. ESFCU also offers low interest rates, no payments for 90 days and summer skip payment options. The offer ends Thursday, Oct. 15.

Teaming Up with Purposity to Help Students in Need

Join Purposity — a not-for-profit app that shares the needs of local students and families. After downloading the app and following PGCPS, you'll receive one weekly notification with specific needs from students and families. You decide if you want to help meet a need in just a few clicks, right from your phone — and you'll know exactly who you're helping and why. Purposity is available in the App Store and Google Play.

Nominations Open for LifeChanger of the Year Award

LifeChanger of the Year is an annual program recognizing K-12 educators and school employees across the country. The program celebrates those who are making a significant difference in the lives of students by exemplifying excellence, positive influence and leadership. [Nominations are now being accepted for the 2020-2021 Program.](#)

ICYMI: In Case You Missed It

Gifted and Talented Educators Receive MEGGYs

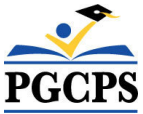
Marites Melad, Benjamin Tasker Middle School Science Teacher; Debra Perhach, Twice Exceptional Teacher Resource, Special Education Office; and Wendy Walton, Capitol Heights Elementary TAG Coordinator, are among this year's MEGGY Award honorees by the Maryland Educators of Gifted Students. Melad and Walton were recognized in the *Outstanding Educator in the Field of Gifted and Talented Education* category. Perhach was honored in the *Providing Learning Environments that Include Opportunities for Students to Demonstrate Academic and/or Creative Talent* category. They will be acknowledged for their accomplishments at the annual Maryland State Conference on Gifted and Talented Education.

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COMMENTS AND IDEAS: communications@pgcps.org



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