



Harford County Public Schools

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HCPS adds Twitter and Constant Contact to communication tools

Social networking; email newsletters to supplement school system communications

To maximize communication efforts with parents, students and the community, Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) has added Twitter and Constant Contact technologies to its communication toolbox. Twitter is a free social networking and blogging service that allows its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Constant Contact is an email marketing system that provides tools for email newsletters, online surveys and event marketing. These two new tools will not replace any existing forms of communication, rather, the school system plans to utilize the tools to supplement its current communication vehicles.

In addition to current communication tools such as the AlertNow automated phone system, the school system website, www.hcps.org and traditional school newsletters and publications, HCPS will now use Twitter to broadcast quick news, events, emergency messages and other important information to parents and the community. Constant Contact will be incorporated into communications through a monthly e-newsletter, HCPS Direct Connect, featuring news, events, emergency notification and other important information, to parents and the community. HCPS Direct Connect newsletters will be archived on the school system's website. These two services will also be used on an as-needed basis and to communicate school closures and delays.

"The addition of Twitter and Constant Contact to current communication efforts will allow us to reach even more parents, students and other constituents in an effective and timely manner," said Superintendent Robert M. Tomback, Ph.D. "Convenience and accessibility continue to be the focus of our communication efforts, and we strive to provide stakeholders with useful resources."

According to its website, Twitter continues to rise in popularity and subscribers, making it a valuable communication tool and resource available to the district to provide timely, accurate information to all stakeholders. This tool, combined with the additional Constant Contact email component, provides new ways for HCPS to reach its stakeholders through convenient and popular mechanisms.

Anyone may sign up to receive email notifications from HCPS by visiting www.hcps.org and entering a current email address into the box on the homepage. Details on the Constant Contact service may be found at www.constantcontact.com. Anyone with a Twitter account may add "@HCPSchools" to their 'following' list to receive school system updates. For general information about signing up for Twitter, visit www.twitter.com/about.

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