

September 6, 2024

Bengal Happenings

Bell Schedules

Follow us – Facebook (Helena High School) and Instagram (helenahighschoolbengals)

Bell Schedules this Week:

Monday – Early Release

Tuesday – Assessment Schedule

Wednesday – Regular Schedule – Picture Day

Thursday – Assessment Schedule

Friday – Regular Schedule

Benchmark Assessments this Week:

This week we will be spending some time to conduct our fall benchmarking assessments for our 9th-11th graders. Our 12th graders will spend the time during the assessment block hearing from Josten's on ordering senior shirts and graduation caps and gowns, reminders from our counseling staff, and connecting with our counselors to do last checks on whether their schedules are set to ensure they will graduate on time.

For our testing, we are switching to the MAP test this year. The Measure of Academic Progress Assessment will serve as a diagnostic assessment in both math and reading for our 9th and 10th grade students. All 9th and 10th graders will be expected to take this assessment on these two days. The data from these assessments will help us have a better understanding of your child's current level of proficiency and help with any potential placement changes that need to take place for them to receive the correct level of resources needed.

Juniors will be starting the ACT Prep practice assessment during this time. These practice assessments will be utilized at points throughout the year to help students get more experiences with the testing format, the types of questions and content they may see on the ACT in the Spring, and to help our planning to ensure we are shoring up any shortcomings with our students so they are prepared for the test in April.

Please remind your child to have their Chromebook and charger with them for these two days and to plug it in the night before, so it is ready to go in the morning. If you have any questions on these assessments, please reach out.

What's Going on in Class?

We look forward to finding an effective, streamlined way to communicate with you regularly on what is happening in our classes. We ask that you bear with us as we fine-tune our formatting for these messages but hope that the information provided helps you get a glimpse of what your child is learning in class and what major assignments, projects, and units are coming up for the month. Each department has been tasked with providing information to answer the following three questions:

1. What are the major units/topics that will be covered the next four weeks?

2. What major assignments, projects, or tests are coming up in the next four weeks?
3. How can families interact with their child about the content being covered?

We have split the departments into two separate groups to share this information. The group below will always be sharing information during the first week of the month, with the rest of our departments sharing out the third week. As mentioned in previous communications, all teachers will also be updating their weekly agendas on their teacher webpages. This week, we check in on the following departments:

- [English](#)
- [Math](#)
- [Social Studies](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Physical Education](#)

Nurse Information

With school starting comes the emergence of colds and illnesses. The graphic below is a helpful reminder from our Nurse on how we can help limit the spread of viruses.

Respiratory Virus Guidance Snapshot

Core Prevention Strategies

- Immunizations
- Hygiene
- Steps for Cleaner Air
- Treatment
- Stay Home and Prevent Spread*


Additional Prevention Strategies

- Masks
- Distancing
- Tests

Layering prevention strategies can be especially helpful when:


- ✓ Respiratory viruses are causing a lot of illness in your community
- ✓ You or those around you have risk factors for severe illness
- ✓ You or those around you were recently exposed, are sick, or are recovering

***Stay home and away from others until,**




 Your symptoms are getting better


and



 You are fever-free (without meds)

for 24 hrs


Then take added precaution for the next 5 days



Would You Like to Substitute? Para Subs?

We are incredibly thankful for the great individuals we have who substitute teach throughout the district every day. We are always, though, looking for more people to help fill the open positions we have each day throughout the district and are hoping you may consider completing the application online to join our substitute pool. In addition to teaching assignments, we can always use help in our paraprofessional pool, a position that can be equally rewarding in that you get an opportunity to work with some of our most

incredible students! To sign up to be a sub, follow this link:

<https://www.applitrack.com/helena/onlineapp/default.aspx?Category=Substitute>

Open House Invitation

We are switching things up a little bit for our Open House this year. Instead of having you follow your child's schedule to meet their teachers and hear more about their classes, we are going to go with more of an Open House Block Party theme this year. Here's the plan -

- Starting at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 17, we will have food trucks, games, booths, and music from our amazingly talented students set up and ready for you to enjoy in the parking lot on the east side of the gym. Families are encouraged to bring their children to the event as we will also have our NHS, Link Crew, and Student Council students available to help keep younger students engaged while you get a chance to connect with our teachers.
- From 6:00-7:00 p.m. the school will be open for families to meet their child's teachers, tour the school if you would like, and get a glimpse of the great things our students and staff are doing day in and day out. During this time, the booths, games, and music will continue outside.
- From 7:00-7:30, we will wrap up the evening with a Pep Rally, as it is also Homecoming Week, to highlight our fall sports teams, cheer and dance squads, and finish off with a rousing rendition of the Bengal Fight Song!

We hope you can join us for this event – it will be a great time!

Digger Days Opportunity

Over the summer, members of the CTE departments at both Capital and Helena High School worked to create an opportunity for students to explore construction jobs and interact with members of those industries. The Digger Days is open to all students at HHS and CHS at a cost of \$10 – scholarships are available if needed. Please see the poster below and use the QR code to sign up if interested. Those wishing for more information can contact Mr. Jake Spearson (jspearson@helenaschools.org).

DIGGER DAYS

Join local contractors for Digger Days
September 30th!

Students will explore the construction industry firsthand including concrete, excavation, framing, landscaping and so much more!

- 🚧 See equipment firsthand and operate heavy machinery!
- 👷 Experience hands on tasks alongside contractors!
- 💬 Chat with local employers

Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to explore your future career!

Lunch will be provided. If you have any food restrictions and/or allergies, please plan on bringing your own food and snacks

REGISTER:

Free and Reduced Lunch Forms and Submission

If you need assistance in paying for your child's meal costs, please make sure you apply for the Free and Reduced Lunch program. Even if you are unsure if your family will qualify for the program or not, we highly encourage you to submit the application as there are a variety of factors that can allow a family to receive the support. The application is confidential and helps to ensure that students have access to food if needed.

The online application can be accessed here:
<https://dca.opi.mt.gov/FRAPP?SponsorNum=0487>

You can find out more about the program and the benefits associated with it by visiting the [Food Service website](#).

Counseling Center Communication

- Dual Credit Registration will be September 10th and 11th. Check with your student about their paperwork or access it [here](#).
- Last day for schedule changes is September 12th.
- Save the Date! Senior Parent Night 9/16/24 at 5:30 PM in the Little Theater.
- College Career Fair at Carroll College on 9/23/24 from 1:30 – 3:30. [Register for a chance to win a scholarship!](#)

Upcoming Dates – [Complete Year at a Glance](#) (This document will be updated as dates are changed)

September 2024

8 – HEF Carnival Classic

10 – MAP Testing – Assessment Schedule, Jostens Graduation Visit with Seniors

11 – Picture Day

12 – MAP Testing – Assessment Schedule, Seniors Counselor Check-ins

16 – Senior Parent Night 5:30 pm Little Theater

16-20 – Homecoming Week!

17 – Open House 7:00-8:30 p.m.

20 – Homecoming/Fall Pep Assembly – Assembly Schedule

21 – Homecoming Dance 8:00-11:00 p.m. HHS Gym

From Last Week

Class Weekly Agendas and Messaging

As the school year gets up and running, teachers are updating their Teacher Pages on our website to have a weekly agenda present. These agendas will be a great place to look if you are absent, need a reminder on the assignment, or want to check on what they intend to cover in class that week. Many teachers will also send out periodic messages to families to update them on what is going on.

Starting next week, content areas will also be providing me with a general outlook on the major topics or units being covered the next month in class, major assignments that are coming up, and ways in which you can interact with your child about what you are learning in class.

If you ever have questions, please contact your child's teacher for more information.

Counseling Center Info from Last Week

- **Schedule Changes** – any student wishing to change their schedule must do so by September 12. After September 12, a student will need to take a withdrawal/fail and have administrative approval.
- **Dual Credit Registration** will happen September 10th and 11th at Helena College. Students must complete the **required application and registration** paperwork along with the **release of information** document. Students who are taking a Math class, must complete the **Math Placement Form**. All documents are accessible on the Counseling Web Page under the [Dual Credit Tab](#). If students are absent on their assigned registration date, they must take all paperwork to the registrar at Helena College on their own time by 5 PM on Friday, September 13th. The following classes offer the option for Dual Credit: College Writing, ComX, College Algebra, Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus AB (Calc I), AP Calculus BC (Calc II), AP Statistics (Stats 216), AP Psychology (Intro to Psychology), and Technical Math. **Questions?** Please contact your student’s teacher and/or school counselor.
- September 2024
- 10-11 Dual Credit Registration at Helena College- [Register Here](#)
- Students must complete the **required application and registration** paperwork along with the **release of information** document. Students who are taking a math class, must complete the **Math Placement Form**. All documents are accessible on the Counseling Web Page under the [Dual Credit Tab](#). If students are absent on their assigned registration date, they must take all paperwork to the registrar at Helena College on their own time by 5 PM on Friday, September 13th. The following classes offer the option for Dual Credit: College Writing, ComX, College Algebra, Pre-Calculus, AP Calculus AB (Calc I), AP Calculus BC (Calc II), AP Statistics (Stats 216), AP Psychology (Intro to Psychology), and Technical Math.
- **Questions?** Please contact your student’s teacher and/or school counselor.
- 16- Senior Parent Night - 5:30pm- Little Theatre @ HHS
 - Visit with your counselors and steps to graduation, scholarships, and college prep.
- 30-Oct 11th- College Application Week
 - Visit Montana University System website for more information and guidance on what type of career path to choose from! This will help when application week comes to decide on a college/University.
- October 2024
- 1- Angel Fund application opens. Please visit Mrs. Staldine in the counseling office for more information

From the Main Office Last Week

- *Parking Passes* - We still have passes left in the red and yellow lots. If you have not purchased a parking pass yet, please do so asap. You need a parking pass to park on campus and in the correct lot. If you have questions on this, please reach out to Mrs. Banks – hbanks@helenaschools.org

- *Activity Passes* – If you plan on attending events throughout the year, we encourage you to purchase an activity pass. Student passes are \$30 and can be purchased through RevTrack. Adult and K-8 students can also purchase an activity pass through the RevTrack site and pick up the pass from our bookkeeper in the main office.

Door Dash and Other Food Delivery Services Policy

While we still will allow students to order food to the school for the 2024-2025 school year, we do have a few reminders on how this works at HHS:

- Students will only be allowed to pick up food or drinks from the main office during the scheduled lunch period. Students will not be allowed to leave class to go to the office to pick up food, coffee, etc.
- If food is not here by the time the lunch period is over, it is likely they will not have an opportunity to pick that up until the end of the day.

We highly encourage you to not use Door Dash, Uber Eats, or any other delivery services for your lunch option, mainly due to the reality that times fluctuate with when they are able to pick up the food and get it to the school and we want to make sure students have an opportunity to eat during that scheduled time. We do have great options available at the school for lunch. Our School Food Service offers affordable meals each day in our cafeteria and our student-ran Catty Shack also provides a variety of options for students who may need something for the day. Both are great alternatives to using the delivery services.

We appreciate your consideration with this and understanding of this.

Angel Fund Applications and Resources

We are once again appreciative for the support the Helena Community provides in supporting the Angel Fund organization, allowing us the opportunity to have school supplies available for those in need and to continue the clothing program available to those that qualify. If your child needs support with getting needed school supplies, please have them contact their counselor, and we will help them get what they may need. We will again have locations around the school with extra notebooks, pencils, pens, and highlighters that anyone can take if they need something for a class.

If you believe you are eligible for support in utilizing the Angel Fund for school clothing, please contact Mrs. Ellaina Staldine at estaldine@helenaschools.org to obtain the application and work through the approval process to be able to get set up for clothing to be purchased.

Senior Picture Submission

All information pertaining to the submission of Senior Photos for the Yearbook can be found on the [HHS Yearbook Webpage](#). Senior photos must be submitted, in proper format

and sizing, to Ms. Walsh by October 31. You can also purchase a yearbook from the site linked on our Yearbook page.

September 13, 2024

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Homecoming Week!

After the first full week of the 2024-2025 school year ends, we hope everyone enjoys the reprieve from the hot summer weather this weekend! This coming week brings a great deal of excitement and engagement opportunities at school. We hope everyone is able to take part in as much as possible! To help keep everything straight, we hope to highlight the big items below:

One of the best parts of Homecoming Week is the spirit week dress up days. After students voted on Mama Mia! as the theme for the dance, our Student Council has worked diligently to build that theme into as many aspects as possible for the week. Their creativity has allowed them to utilize some of the best ABBA songs and aspects of the movie into the dress up days for the week. We want to remind and encourage everyone to participate at the level they can with the days. Our Bengal Closet has great clothing articles available that can be accessed if someone needs something to help complete their outfit each day.

Monday - “Lei all your love on me” - An epic game of rock, paper, scissors will commence on Monday, with everyone given a lei at the start of the day. Leis can be won if you beat another person with a lei during passing periods.

Tuesday – Our Last Summer – wear beach inspired clothing. A reminder that clothing needs to be school appropriate – everyone needs to wear shirts, pants, and shoes to school.

Wednesday – Super Trooper Trios – find a couple of friends and dress alike!

Thursday – Denim Donna Day – Wear Jeans!

Friday - “Dancing Queen” Class Color Day – Seniors wear white, Juniors blue, Sophomores pink, Freshmen purple.

Other events happening this week:

Monday – Senior Parent Night – 5:30 p.m. in the Little Theater

Tuesday – Open House Block Party – Come join us for a great night of seeing what HHS has to offer your children! Soccer hosts Sentinel at 3 and 5 p.m.

Thursday – Volleyball hosts Sentinel with the Freshmen and Sophomore games starting at 4:00 p.m.

Friday – Football vs Glacier at 7 p.m.

Saturday – Homecoming Dance from 8-11 p.m. at HHS

Attendance Support

With the start of the new year and new secretaries in the attendance office, we appreciate your patience as we adjust to these positions and how we have it staffed. We are making a few adjustments this coming week with the hopes that it streamlines our processes and

abilities to work with families for attendance purposes. We do ask that you review the reminders below:

- When calling to excuse your child for the day or to get them out for an appointment and need to leave a message, please make sure you include and spell their last name in the message.
- If you are calling to excuse your child for an appointment, please excuse them for the time they need to leave in order to get to their appointment on time.
- If you know your child has an appointment coming up, you are welcome to call before the day of the appointment to excuse them.
- If your child has a recurring appointment, we are happy to work with you on a plan for that, so you do not need to call in each day to excuse them.
- All students need to sign out and sign back in if they are leaving for an appointment. If you are picking up for an appointment, the best place to do so is the drop off loop on the north side of the building. Students need to stop by the attendance office by the cafeteria to sign out.

NAMI Walk

Mental Health Awareness and Support is something we take seriously at Helena High. One annual event that we encourage participation in each year is the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Walk. This year, the walk and vendor fair will take place on Sunday, September 22 at 12:30 p.m. Warm up and a chance to visit the vendors at the event will start at 11:30 a.m.



Booster Club Support Opportunities

We are lucky to have an active Booster Club working to support all clubs and activities in our building. They are unable to do this, though, without the support of our amazing families and donors. Two fundraisers are coming up over the next month to get on your calendars:

Buffalo Wild Wings Night – September 30 – Bring in the coupon below and a portion of your tab will be donated back to HHS Boosters.

Dueling Pianos Event – October 12 – more info to come on how to purchase a seat or table for friends and family. This will be a crosstown event, and we look forward to beating the Bruins in this event this year as well!

Native American Students Open House Invitation


**COME AND JOIN THE
TITLE VI
INDIAN EDUCATION
OPEN HOUSE/ FAMILY
NIGHT**

September 18, 2024
FROM 6-8
AT
Bryant Elementary


WE ENCOURAGE ALL TO ATTEND!

WE WILL HAVE:

- > FOOD
- > Powwow practice



FOR MORE INFORMATION, YOU CAN
CALL AMANDA WALKINGCHILD AT
406-461-4584. HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL
THERE!



- Dual Credit registration is complete! If your student missed this event, please contact Cheryl Ravenscroft at Helena College at 406 447-6993.
- The last day to change schedules was 9/13/24. Any requests must now go through administration.
- Senior Parent Night is 9/16/24 at 5:30 PM in the Little Theater.
- FSA ID Night- 11/13/24 This will kick start our FAFSA application process.

AP Exam Registration is now open through November 15th for students enrolled in an AP course. Taking an AP exam is an opportunity for your student to earn college credits or advanced placement. AP exams are optional, but strongly encouraged. The exam fee of \$50 can be paid online at <https://helenaschools.revtrak.net/>. Additional fee waivers are available if your student qualifies for free/reduced lunch.

After the November 15th registration deadline, a \$40 late fee will be added to each exam registration. Exams cannot be ordered after March 15th. Exams cancelled after Nov. 15th are subject to a \$40 cancellation fee withheld from the refund. Learn more about the AP exam opportunity, policies, and dates by referencing the AP Exam Registration email sent out to families on September 9th. If you have any AP related questions, or did not receive the email, please contact Ellaina Staldine at estaldine@helenaschools.org.

Angel Fund Applications- Angel Fund is a generous program designed to help families purchase basic school clothing, shoes, and warm outerwear. Students who qualify for free/reduced lunch and demonstrate satisfactory attendance can apply for Angel Fund assistance to receive \$200 to shop at designated local stores. Applications are available starting on **October 1st- November 30th**. If interested, please send your student to the counseling office to pick up an application on or after October 1st.

Upcoming Dates – [Complete Year at a Glance](#) (This document will be updated as dates are changed)

September 2024

- 16 – Senior Parent Night 5:30 pm Little Theater
- 16-20 – Homecoming Week!
- 17 – Open House/Block Party – 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- 20 – Homecoming/Fall Pep Assembly – Assembly Schedule
- 21 – Homecoming Dance 8:00-11:00 p.m. HHS Gym
- 27 – Juniors to Pow Wow Demonstration Day – 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 30-Oct 4 – College Application Week

From Last Week

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Sights from Homecoming Week

As the week comes to an end, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our Helena High Community – students, staff, and parents – for the cooperation and understanding as we worked through Wednesday morning. I recognize those situations can be very nerve-racking for all involved, but I felt those in our school handled the situation admirably. As a school, we always take time after events like this to meet as teams and reflect when these events happen and work to improve our processes each time – as we ask students to do with the revision and reflection process on a daily basis. We look forward to continuing to work collectively with families throughout the remainder of the year.

The rest of the week saw a great amount of engagement from students and staff participating in dress up days, attending events, and helping to build the continued excitement around being a Bengal! Below are some of the great photos of the week!



What's Happening in Fine Arts, World Languages, Career and Technical Education, and Special Services Classes?

As we make our way to the midterm (9/27) of the first quarter (yes, it flew by!), we get a chance this week for our first check-ins with our Fine Arts, Foreign Language, CTE, and Special Services courses. The work being completed in all these classes is top notch and provides incredible opportunities for our students to build lifelong career skills. To get a sense of what is happening in these classes, click the links below:

[Fine Arts](#)

[World Languages](#)

[Career and Technical Education \(CTE\)](#)

[Special Services](#)

First Coffee with the Principal

Tuesday, September 24 will serve as the first Coffee with the Principal meeting. These meetings are intended to give parents an opportunity to hear an update on what we have

going on at the school, what we are working on for the year, and to provide a chance for parents to ask questions as well. These meetings will take place at 8:30 a.m. in Room 5 at HHS. There will also be a link for parents to join virtually if that option works better for you.

The working agenda for this month's meeting can be found [here](#). The link to join virtually can be found [here](#).

Why Attendance Matters

As we get close to finishing the first month of the school year, we want to reiterate the importance of attending school on a regular basis. While we recognize life happens and we really do want students to stay home when they are sick, the benefits of attending school on a regular basis have incredible dividends for students in the long run.

Working on increasing and maintaining quality student attendance through family engagement will be a major goal of our school this year. We recognize that this will continue to be a team effort as we impart the importance of attending classes regularly. As I have spoken with various student and staff groups this year, student attendance continues to be one area that consistently comes up as a focus area. The positive side to this is that we have some positive ideas coming from these conversations that I look forward to implementing this year.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS
1 or 2 days doesn't seem like much..

If you miss:	That Equals:	Which is:	Over 13 years of schooling that's:
1 day every 2 weeks	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years of school
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

Photo credit: Conserve Curiosity

As mentioned, we recognize that there are always extenuating circumstances that arise, but our hope this year is we can continue to work together to build student attendance in school.

The second part of absenteeism is getting to class on time. While this has been better overall so far this year, tardies continue to be an area of concern. Even though it may not

seem like much to be 5 or 6 minutes late each day, all those minutes eventually add up to a significant amount of lost instruction time that can be detrimental to the understanding of material and ability to engage with instructors.



Photo credit: Conserve Curiosity

Teens and Vaping

Vaping continues to be an incredible issue at schools across the state and nation. Each year vapes become more and more prevalent in schools and it is important that we work collectively to help inform our students on the harmful health effects associated with vaping.

As we see this as a national trend that needs addressing, many free resources are available to students and families to help support breaking the nicotine addiction associated with vaping. If you or your child feel as if you would like more information about how to stop vaping, please do not hesitate to reach out to their school counselor or administration as we would be happy to work with individuals on what those resources are.

The Office of Public Instruction released [this OpEd](#) related to this as well that is worth the read.

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September 2024

27 – Juniors to Pow Wow Demonstration Day – 9:30-11:30 a.m.

30-Oct 4 – College Application Week

October 2024

Sept 30-Oct 4 – College Application Week

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- If your child has a recurring appointment, we are happy to work with you on a plan for that, so you do not need to call in each day to excuse them.
- All students need to sign out and sign back in if they are leaving for an appointment. If you are picking up for an appointment, the best place to do so is the drop off loop on the north side of the building. Students need to stop by the attendance office by the cafeteria to sign out.

NAMI Walk

Mental Health Awareness and Support is something we take seriously at Helena High. One annual event that we encourage participation in each year is the NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Walk. This year, the walk and vendor fair will take place on Sunday, September 22 at 12:30 p.m. Warm up and a chance to visit the vendors at the event will start at 11:30 a.m.



Booster Club Support Opportunities

We are lucky to have an active Booster Club working to support all clubs and activities in our building. They are unable to do this, though, without the support of our amazing families and donors. Two fundraisers are coming up over the next month to get on your calendars:

Buffalo Wild Wings Night – September 30 – Bring in the coupon below and a portion of your tab will be donated back to HHS Boosters.

Dueling Pianos Event – October 12 – more info to come on how to purchase a seat or table for friends and family. This will be a crosstown event, and we look forward to beating the Bruins in this event this year as well!

Would You Like to Substitute? Para Subs?

We are incredibly thankful for the great individuals we have who substitute teach throughout the district every day. We are always, though, looking for more people to help fill the open positions we have each day throughout the district and are hoping you may consider completing the application online to join our substitute pool. In addition to teaching assignments, we can always use help in our paraprofessional pool, a position that can be equally rewarding in that you get an opportunity to work with some of our most incredible students! To sign up to be a sub, follow this link:

<https://www.applitrack.com/helena/onlineapp/default.aspx?Category=Substitute>

Counseling Center Info from Last Week

- Dual Credit registration is complete! If your student missed this event, please contact Cheryl Ravenscroft at Helena College at 406 447-6993.
- The last day to change schedules was 9/13/24. Any requests must now go through administration.
- Senior Parent Night is 9/16/24 at 5:30 PM in the Little Theater.
- FSA ID Night- 11/13/24 This will kick start our FAFSA application process.

AP Exam Registration is now open through November 15th for students enrolled in an AP course. Taking an AP exam is an opportunity for your student to earn college credits or advanced placement. AP exams are optional, but strongly encouraged. The exam fee of \$50 can be paid online at <https://helenaschools.revtrak.net/>. Additional fee waivers are available if your student qualifies for free/reduced lunch.

After the November 15th registration deadline, a \$40 late fee will be added to each exam registration. Exams cannot be ordered after March 15th. Exams cancelled after Nov. 15th are subject to a \$40 cancellation fee withheld from the refund. Learn more about the AP exam opportunity, policies, and dates by referencing the AP Exam Registration email sent out to families on September 9th. If you have any AP related questions, or did not receive the email, please contact Ellaina Staldine at estaldine@helenaschools.org.

Angel Fund Applications- Angel Fund is a generous program designed to help families purchase basic school clothing, shoes, and warm outerwear. Students who qualify for free/reduced lunch and demonstrate satisfactory attendance can apply for Angel Fund assistance to receive \$200 to shop at designated local stores. Applications are available starting on **October 1st- November 30th**. If interested, please send your student to the counseling office to pick up an application on or after October 1st.

September 27, 2024

Bengal Happenings

[Bell Schedules](#)

Follow us – Facebook (Helena High School) and Instagram (helenahighschoolbengals)

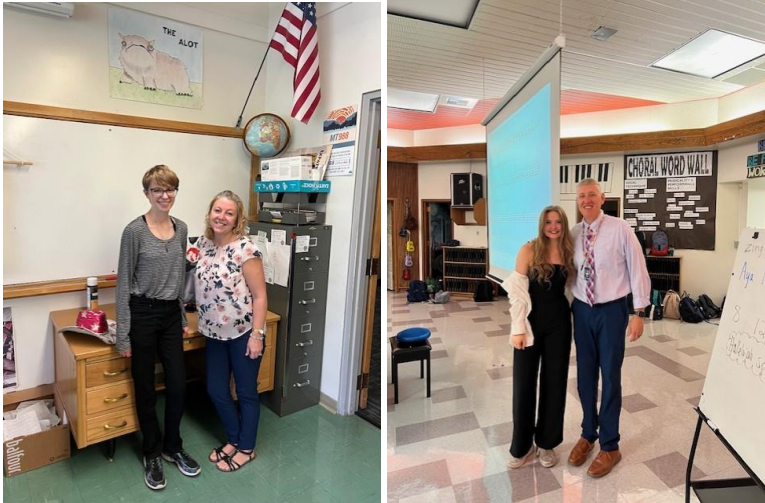
Attendance – hhsattendance@helenaschools.org - (406) 324-2211

Let's Talk Academics and Growth at HHS

Day in and day out, it is encouraging to see the engagement happening in our classrooms at HHS to help our students be college and career ready by the time they leave our doors. Much of this work is centered around the desire of our students to want to succeed and be prepared for their next chapter in life, but also through the hard work and countless hours put in by our teaching staff to stay on top of the best practices in their content and teaching methods to help students engage and learn each day.

Each month this year, we will be sharing out on student growth to help demonstrate the importance of taking education seriously, but to also celebrate the results of the hard work of everyone here at HHS! We also recognize there are many aspects that contribute to educating the whole child and each person can show growth in multiple ways. We will attempt to share as many aspects as possible of the various stories as we can.

To start off, each year, interested Juniors are given the opportunity to take the PSAT-NMSQT test. This test serves as another practice opportunity in a timed, high stakes testing environment, but also serves as the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship. Helena High has historically had a great history with students meeting the threshold of qualifying as semi-finalists and finalists for the scholarship. Based on the data from the National Merit Scholarship Committee, roughly 50,000 of the 1.3 million students who take the test are recognized as semifinalists, and two of those this year are HHS students! We are excited for these two individuals to work through the scholarship application process and hopefully become finalists, making them eligible for the scholarship recognition! Congratulations to Evelyn Callery and Eva Skibicki on their incredible hard work in the classroom!



All State Music Participants

Each year, we are fortunate enough to have amazingly talented students work hard to grow their abilities musically. It takes an incredible amount of time, effort, and practice to work on the techniques outlined by our teaching staff to be able to earn an opportunity to participate in and perform at the All State Musical Festival. This year, the following students have achieved that goal and will participate in the All State Musical Festival in Billings over the MEA Convention Days:

For Choir:

- Nadja Bolotsky
- Brady Lay
- Ella Nasset
- Lily Pierson
- Leila Zentz

For Band:

- Carson Payne

For Orchestra:

- Elliot Cleary
- Isabel Ward
- Nailah Freeman
- Freya Elias
- Emeline Jefferies

Native American Heritage Day

In Montana, the last Friday in September marks Native American Heritage Day. We were lucky to have multiple activities organized by our teaching staff to help immerse all our

students in the Native American culture. If you are able this weekend, please consider making your way to the Last Chance Pow Wow held at the Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds.

A few highlights from today:

- Our Native American students were able to be present and either perform or volunteer throughout the entire event for the weekend.
- In our Biology classes, students heard from Jennifer Stadum about the use of herbs and other native plants in the area.
- Juniors, and a few others, took time to attend the Pow Wow Demonstration Day at the Fairgrounds where they participated in Traditional Games and watched or participated in the demonstration Pow Wow.



- Freshmen, and a few others, were able to view part of the film, *Bring Them Back*, and engage in a Q&A around the methods being used to rebuild Bison herds in the state and the importance of the Bison in Native culture. Thank you, Mike Jetty, for your time!



- Additionally, our Culinary students helped with preparing the food that will be consumed throughout the weekend.



RBHI Screening Reminders

As a reminder, we will once again be conducting our mental health screenings with the assistance of the Rural Health Behavioral Initiative during the week of October 7. Students will be screened in their 2nd period classes based on where their 2nd period teachers' name falls on the schedule. If you would like to opt your child out of completing the screening, please complete the opt out form linked below and return to bkessler1@helenaschools.org or have them drop off a signed hard copy to the main office. We ask that you have these turned in at least one day prior to their screening date so we can inform teachers of who will not be screened.

[Form](#)

Schedule:

- Tuesday, October 8 – 2nd period teachers with last name Artis – Galbavy
- Wednesday, October 9 – 2nd period teachers with last name Garza – Mercier

- Thursday, October 10 – 2nd period teachers with last name O’Malley - Svingen
- Friday, October 11 – 2nd period teachers with last name Sykes - Wigen

Open House Feedback

Thank you to those of you who were able to make our Open House night this year. We are hopeful that it gave you time to connect with your child’s teachers and learn more about what we offer at the school. As we do our own reflections on how to continue to improve the product moving forward, we are interested in your feedback as well. If you were able to attend, please complete [this survey](#) to share your thoughts.

Bengal Boosters Update

We continue to appreciate the support our Booster Club gives our students. Please see the information below on a few upcoming events:

- 50/50 Ticket Sale proceeds from the Crosstown Football Game will go to the Zeke Copeland Family
- Buffalo Wild Wings will be donating a portion of Monday, September 30’s sales to the Booster Club. Present the [linked ticket](#) for dine in or carry out that night.
- Dueling Pianos event on October 12 – help us beat Capital off the field/courts as well in this fundraising battle (you do not have to attend to support, donations are welcome!)
- If you have questions or comments, or are interested in helping – contact the Booster Club at hhsbengalboosterclub@gamil.com

Counseling Center Update:

College Application Week! Seniors can join in the fun by showing up periods 6 or 7 in the library the week of September 30 – October 4th. We will use the [Apply Montana](#) application to submit one application to multiple Montana 2-year and 4-year colleges.

Angel Fund Application: Students who qualify for free/reduced lunch and demonstrate satisfactory attendance can apply for Angel Fund assistance to receive \$200 for basic school clothing. Applications are available starting October 1st in the counseling office. Your student may stop by during school hours to pick up an application. If you have not yet applied for free & reduced lunch, you may do so at: <https://helenaschools.org/departments/food-services/>. Questions? Please contact Ellaina Staldine at 324-2224 or estaldine@helenaschools.org

AP Testing. Students who plan to sit for an Advanced Placement exam in May of 2025 must pay for each exam by November 15th. [Click here to access RevTrak.](#)

HHS Food Pantry: Our HHS Food Pantry is up and running. We help to provide snacks throughout the day to hungry kids, plus we provide weekend food bags to those in need.

Thank you for helping us take care of our Bengal Family! [Click here to contribute](#) a donation to our HHS Food Pantry.

FSA ID Night: Save the date! November 13th in the HHS library 5:30-7pm.

MSU Visit at HHS: 1pm- November 18th in counseling office.

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From Last Week

What’s Happening in Fine Arts, World Languages, Career and Technical Education, and Special Services Classes?

As we make our way to the midterm (9/27) of the first quarter (yes, it flew by!), we get a chance this week for our first check-ins with our Fine Arts, Foreign Language, CTE, and Special Services courses. The work being completed in all these classes is top notch and provides incredible opportunities for our students to build lifelong career skills. To get a sense of what is happening in these classes, click the links below:

[Fine Arts](#)

[World Languages](#)

[Career and Technical Education \(CTE\)](#)

[Special Services](#)

Why Attendance Matters

As we get close to finishing the first month of the school year, we want to reiterate the importance of attending school on a regular basis. While we recognize life happens and we really do want students to stay home when they are sick, the benefits of attending school on a regular basis have incredible dividends for students in the long run.

Working on increasing and maintaining quality student attendance through family engagement will be a major goal of our school this year. We recognize that this will

continue to be a team effort as we impart the importance of attending classes regularly. As I have spoken with various student and staff groups this year, student attendance continues to be one area that consistently comes up as a focus area. The positive side to this is that we have some positive ideas coming from these conversations that I look forward to implementing this year.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS
1 or 2 days doesn't seem like much..

If you miss:	That Equals:	Which is:	Over 13 years of schooling that's:
1 day every 2 weeks	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years of school
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

Photo credit: Conserve Curiosity

As mentioned, we recognize that there are always extenuating circumstances that arise, but our hope this year is we can continue to work together to build student attendance in school.

The second part of absenteeism is getting to class on time. While this has been better overall so far this year, tardies continue to be an area of concern. Even though it may not seem like much to be 5 or 6 minutes late each day, all those minutes eventually add up to a significant amount of lost instruction time that can be detrimental to the understanding of material and ability to engage with instructors.



Photo credit: Conserve Curiosity

Teens and Vaping

Vaping continues to be an incredible issue at schools across the state and nation. Each year vapes become more and more prevalent in schools and it is important that we work collectively to help inform our students on the harmful health effects associated with vaping.

As we see this as a national trend that needs addressing, many free resources are available to students and families to help support breaking the nicotine addiction associated with vaping. If you or your child feel as if you would like more information about how to stop vaping, please do not hesitate to reach out to their school counselor or administration as we would be happy to work with individuals on what those resources are.

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