

WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS KNOW ABOUT “WORK-TO-RULE”?



Teachers and educators want to be back with students for in-person learning as soon as it is safe to do so. Working-to-rule is not our preference, but thousands of your teachers and other staff across the county feel it is necessary to protect the health and safety of our schools. We miss you and we cannot wait to see you all in person. However, HCPSS should not reopen schools without doing everything they can to create a safe environment for staff and students.

Q: What does “working-to-rule” mean?

Working “to-the-rule” means performing our normal duties (“the rule” refers to duties that educators are required to do) during our normal working hours. The idea is to highlight the extra, unpaid work educators and staff do before/after school, on weekends, and at other points during the day. We love working with our students and we love volunteering our time to help you succeed. But we cannot do that when the Board of Education won’t prioritize the health and safety of staff and students.

Q: What can we expect as students during this time?

There will be many changes as you transition to a hybrid learning model, but we hope that the impact to you will be minimal. However, you may notice one or more of the following:

- ➔ Educators will not be available outside of their working hours. It may also take longer for them to respond to your emails, so we ask you to be patient.
- ➔ Some after-school activities like student clubs will be cancelled. Other activities, however, like athletics, will continue as planned.
- ➔ It may take teachers longer to grade exams and assignments. We will do our best to provide grades as soon as possible, but it may take up to three weeks to return an assignment.
- ➔ Makeup assignments are at the discretion of your teacher, and they may not occur unless there is an extreme circumstance.
- ➔ Educators will be unable to write letters of recommendation while work-to-rule is in effect.

Q: Why are educators taking this action now?

- ➔ We believe teachers and staff deserve a safe and healthy workplace. We also believe that students deserve a safe and healthy learning environment. Students have the choice to stay

home until they are fully vaccinated, and we want staff to have the same option. HCPSS has a responsibility to keep all of us safe.

- When making the decision to move to a new hybrid model, the Board of Education abandoned the health metrics they adopted in the Fall, which will no longer be used to determine when or if it is safe for schools to reopen.
- The Board claims there will be adequate PPE for staff and students, and that classrooms have been set up to maintain 6 feet of distance, but it is unclear if the school system has the resources to meet these CDC guidelines. Additionally, there are other CDC recommendations that would help minimize the spread of COVID that the system has chosen to ignore, such as using student cohorts and regular COVID testing.
- The Board of Education's decision to move to a hybrid model requires your teachers to provide in-person and virtual instruction **at the same time**. This will prevent us from providing the high-quality education you deserve. We want to be back in the classrooms with you, but we also want to make sure that we have done everything we can to ensure that we are all safe.

Q: What do teachers and staff want?

- Ensure educators are immunized before physically returning to worksites, as other counties like Prince George's and Charles County have already done.
- When staff and students return to worksites, HCPSS must adhere to metrics to prevent COVID spread.
- Governor Hogan must release more vaccines, and the County must prioritize more vaccines for educators.
- The Board of Education must stand up to bullying behavior from the State Superintendent and Governor Hogan. Our lives must matter more than politics.

Q: How can you support your teachers and other staff during this time?

- Please be patient with us as we work to grade your assignments and respond to your questions/emails.
- Consider wearing red (**#RedforEd**) in support of your teachers when coming to school or during virtual instruction.