



## A+ Partnership: A Detailed Description

This description of the A+ Partnership between Howard County Public School System and Howard County Library System, drawn from our 2022 partnership MOU, is shared to support partnership activities in our community and to assist other library systems and educators in their partnership efforts.

### Brief overview:

In the fall of 2002, Howard County Public School System and Howard County Library System formed A+ Partners in Education to expand the educational opportunities and enhance the academic achievement of every Howard County student.

It was one of the first systemwide school and public library partnerships in the nation.

Together we have furthered students' academic success, enhanced their love of reading and learning, and forged a connection to libraries that will serve them their whole lives.

### Partnership components:

- A. **Library Access for All Students, Educators**
- B. **Academic Support and Enrichment**
- C. **Academic Competitions Add Excitement to Learning**
- D. **Outreach to Increase Library Use and Advance Equity and Student Success**
- E. **Strategic Coordination and Communication**

#### A. **Library Access for All Students, Educators**

- i. The A+ partnership provides every HCPSS student from pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade an HCLS library account (Note: families may opt out if desired). Go to [hcpss.me](http://hcpss.me) and click on the library's logo, the "Hi" button to get the student account number and pin. New student accounts are live by mid-October.
- ii. This gives HCPSS students immediate access to powerful HCLS e-resources, and "Brainfuse" live homework help from certified tutors (provided in partnership with HPCSS and the HCLS Friends and Foundation).
- iii. A+ Educator Accounts (link) provide HCPSS staff (as well as other educational professionals in the county) with higher borrowing limits and longer borrowing periods.

#### B. **Academic Support and Enrichment**

- i. Summer Reading and Classes for Continuous Academic Engagement
  - 1. Summer reading lists for students in all grade levels are developed by HCPSS Library Media Specialists and HCLS Children's & Teen Instructors and Research Specialists.



2. HCPSS Library Media Specialists and HCLS staff promote summer learning engagement through classes that present book list offerings, summer reading, and information on free library summer classes.
3. HCLS provides the summer reading program and book promotion presentations to HCPSS Academic Intervention Summer School students.

#### ii. Classroom-based Literacy and Research Support

HCLS Instructors guest-teach classes with supplemental materials from the HCLS collection to enrich instruction and connect HCPSS students to HCLS resources relevant to their assignments, learning goals and interests. Examples include: Stories Galore, instruction in HCLS research resources.

#### iii. Kindergarten, Here We Come! & Moving Up to Middle School

Annual classes that help students succeed with important academic transitions. Opportunities for students entering kindergarten to practice boarding a standing school bus and for middle school students to have locker combination time trials and more.

#### iv. Homework Clubs

HCLS offers Homework Clubs at several branches. HCLS maintains relationships with related HCPSS schools to best support these students.

#### v. Mobile STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) Instruction

HCLS' new 33-foot STEAM instruction vehicle provides school-time and afterschool enrichment for HCPSS students K-12 and the broader community. Equipped with STEAM equipment, laptops, and WiFi, students of all ages are able to collaborate, explore their creativity, strengthen their critical thinking skills, and develop new knowledge through interactive, project-based classes.

### C. Academic Competitions Add Excitement to Learning

#### i. Battle of the Books

Fifth grade students participate in a lively academic competition that improves reading comprehension, builds vocabulary, and teaches teamwork and good sportsmanship. Selected by HCLS instructors and HCPSS library media staff, titles include a wide range of reading levels and subjects. In addition to reading the books, teams choose a team name and design a team costume.

#### ii. Spelling Bee and BumbleBee<sup>SM</sup>

HCPSS students in grades four through eight who win their school bees compete in the HCLS Spelling Bee, which is organized under the Scripps National Spelling Bee rules and registered with Scripps National as an official regional bee. The winner of the HCLS Spelling Bee advances to the National Spelling Bee. The BumbleBee<sup>SM</sup> is a companion initiative to the HCLS Spelling Bee for students in grades one through three.

#### iii. History Day Research



HCLS Research Specialists offer group classes and one-on-one assistance for students preparing for National History Day, covering topic selection and development, appropriate primary and secondary resources, and review of finished projects.

#### **D. Outreach to Increase Library Use and Advance Equity and Student Success**

##### **i. Continuous Engagement**

1. Each HCPSS school has an [assigned HCLS staff liaison](#) to coordinate A+ activities, answer questions, and listen for feedback and ideas. HCLS staff collaborate with HCPSS media specialists, liaisons, Title I staff, and more to share library resources with students and their families.
2. Library staff provide information and resources at key events in HCPSS school communities including Family Literacy Nights, Title I family programming, orientations, and more.
3. When possible, HCLS branches host school Family Nights to increase family connections to their local library.
4. HCLS staff collaborate with HCPSS school liaisons, Title I staff, and more to share library resources with students and their families.

##### **ii. On the Road to Kindergarten Mobile Library**

Mobile library visits to prekindergarten programs providing children with pre-issued library cards an opportunity to check out a book. Their families are also invited to attend to learn about library classes, events, community resources and services, sign up for a library card, and borrow materials to support their child's learning at home.

##### **iii. Kindergarten Field Trips to HCLS**

Every kindergarten class visits their local HCLS branch for tours and a library introduction class to increase familiarity and connection to library resources for students and their families.

#### **E. Strategic Coordination and Communication**

##### **i. Ongoing Collaboration**

Ongoing meetings and collaboration that help both organizations connect to and complement select components of the other's curriculum. Provide opportunities for staff from each organization to serve on committees and advisories of the other organization.

##### **ii. Cross-training for Success**



HCPSS will provide select training to help HCLS support and supplement HCPSS instruction (ex: training HCLS in new literacy strategies) and HCLS will train HCPSS staff to understand opportunities within HCLS resources (ex: training media specialists in new HCLS tools).

Please direct any questions to [communityengagement@hclibrary.org](mailto:communityengagement@hclibrary.org)

#### **A. Academic Support and Enrichment**

- i. Please email academic support and enrichment requests to the appropriate HCLS School Liaison ([link](#)).
- ii. Summer Reading and Classes for Continuous Academic Engagement
  1. Summer reading lists for students in all grade levels are developed by HCPSS Library Media Specialists and HCLS Children & Teen Instructors and Research Specialists.
  2. HCPSS Library Media Specialists and HCLS staff promote summer learning engagement through classes that book recommendations, summer reading, and information on free library summer classes.
  3. HCLS instructors visit HCPSS Academic Intervention Summer School sites to engage with students and promote summer reading and book recommendations.
- iii. Classroom-based Literacy and Research Support  
HCLS Instructors guest-teach classes with supplemental materials from the HCLS collection to enrich instruction and connect HCPSS students to HCLS resources relevant to their assignments, learning goals and interests. Examples include: Stories Galore, instruction in HCLS research resources.
- iv. Kindergarten, Here We Come! & Moving Up to Middle School  
These annual classes help students succeed with important academic transitions. Rising kindergarteners get to practice boarding a standing school bus, while rising sixth graders hear from older students, compete in locker combination time trials, and more.
- v. Homework Clubs  
HCLS offers Homework Clubs at several branches. HCLS maintains relationships with related HCPSS schools to best support these students.
- vi. Mobile STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) Instruction  
HCLS' new 33-foot STEAM instruction vehicle provides school-time and afterschool enrichment for K-12 students and the broader community. Equipped with STEAM equipment, laptops, and WiFi, students collaborate, explore their creativity, strengthen their critical thinking skills, and develop new knowledge through interactive, project-based classes.

#### **B. Academic Competitions Add Excitement to Learning**

- i. Battle of the Books ([link](#))



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- iii. **History Day Research (link)**  
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### **C. Outreach to Increase Library Use and Advance Equity and Student Success**

- i. Please email outreach requests to the appropriate HCLS School Liaison ([link](#)).
  
- ii. **On the Road to Kindergarten Mobile Library**  
Mobile library visits to prekindergarten programs provide children with an opportunity to borrow books. Their families are also invited to attend to learn about library classes, events, community resources and services, sign up for a library card, and borrow materials to support their child's learning at home.
  
- iii. **Kindergarten Field Trips to HCLS**  
Every kindergarten class visits their local HCLS branch as part of their school year. Students tour the library and take a class to introduce them to the library, show them how it works, meet the staff, and increase familiarity and connection to library resources for them and their families.
  
- iv. **Continuous Engagement**
  1. Each HCPSS school has an assigned HCLS staff liaison to coordinate A+ activities, answer questions, and listen for feedback and ideas. HCLS staff collaborate with HCPSS media specialists, liaisons, Title I staff, and more to share library resources with students and their families.
  2. Library staff provide information and resources at key events in HCPSS school communities including Family Literacy Nights, Title I family programming, orientations, and more.
  3. HCLS branches host school Family Nights to increase family connections to their



HOWARD COUNTY  
LIBRARY SYSTEM  
Public Education for All



local library.

#### **D. Strategic Coordination and Communication**

- i. **Ongoing Collaboration**  
Ongoing meetings and collaboration help both organizations connect to and complement select components of the other's curriculum. Staff from each organization also have the opportunity to serve on committees and advisories of the other organization.
- ii. **Cross-training for Success**  
HCPSS provides select training to help HCLS support and supplement HCPSS instruction (ex: training HCLS in new literacy strategies), and HCLS trains HCPSS staff to understand opportunities within HCLS resources (ex: training media specialists in new HCLS tools).