

# HARPER CREEK SCHOOLS *Newsletter*



EDUCATE • EMPOWER • EQUIP  
**Students for Life**

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## A Summer Break Full of Wonder

By Rob Ridgeway, Superintendent

Summer break, two simple words that can be described with a plethora of adjectives: carefree, liberating, fun, and relaxing – just to name a few. Summer break is fast approaching and while summer is all of those things, summer is a time for children to continue learning, too. Just as summer break has many adjectives to describe it, likewise, summer learning is boundless in opportunity.

As a matter of course, we as educators focus on reading throughout the school year and summer break by asking parents to encourage their children to read, listen to their children read, as well as read and share good books with their children. Above and beyond reading, I want our children to be active, curious, and full of wonder. My hope for our children is that each day be a new adventure with authentic experiences. Summer learning can take place every day with intentional planning of opportunities. Below are a few ideas to get you started. Happy Adventures!

### Summer Adventure List

- Walk in woods
- Zoo day
- Camping under the stars
- Farmers market
- Stroll through historic neighborhoods
- Chase hot air balloons
- No Family Left Indoors Pond Exploration – Clear Lake Camp
- Kellogg Bird Sanctuary
- Kingman Museum
- Leila Arboretum
- Volunteer
- Teach a grandparent how to use Snapchat, FaceTime or Skype
- Game night
- Stargaze
- Make a summer photo journal
- Pick fresh berries
- Visit a state park
- Kayak the 'Creek
- Plant a garden



**DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI CEREMONY**  
Honoring  
**JUDGE TRACIE TOMAK**  
Class of 1985  
May 31, 2019, 3:00 PM  
Harper Creek Administration Complex, Board Room

## Summer Math Fun!

By Heather Cotts, Instructional Coach

Yes - you read the headline correctly!! Although it may seem like “summer math fun” is a bit of an oxymoron, it’s actually not if you enjoy playing card and dice games! We know summer learning is critical for our children to prevent the dreaded “summer slide”.



Harper Creek is committed to keeping our students positively engaged in active learning over the summer. We are providing fun math games you can play with your child that require just a deck of cards or a pair of dice. These games are for students in grades K-8 and are perfect for not only practicing math, but for spending time together as a family. Please contact either Heather Cotts at [cottsh@harpercreek.net](mailto:cottsh@harpercreek.net) or Rebecca Schneider at 441-6579 to pick up your game packet today!

## Summer Fitness

By Ed Greenman, Athletic Director

For the first time in a long time, the summer for Harper Creek students will be shorter than ever. School starts before labor day, but it is a long enough period of time from the end of school in June to the start of school in August to lose out on being fit if all you do is become a couch potato. Don't let that happen to you!



Staying fit in the summer can be enhanced by doing small tasks such as riding a bike, going hiking, taking a long walk, or swimming at the lake or pool. For those that are involved in athletics, odds are your coach will have you doing things like weight training, running on the track, agility drills, or playing the sport that you are involved in. Most of our athletic teams have camps in the summer where everyone comes together to learn the skills necessary to play their respective sport. Our coaches do a great job of instructing you and “putting you through the paces” so you will be ready to compete when the fall season begins.

Whether you're an athlete or not, you have to have the self-discipline to be active in the summer. Find one or more activities that you enjoy that raises your heart rate for at least 30 minutes and do this at least 4-5 times a week. Find a friend or a group of friends to exercise and be sure to encourage each other, and make it a habit. Once you do this for a month or two, you will see and feel the benefits and feel better both mentally and physically.

**First Day of School for Students • Wednesday, August 21, 2019**



## Avoid the Summer Reading Slide

By Kris Gilbert, Sonoma Elementary Instructional Coach

Studies show that children who do not read or have access to books during the summer months may experience a “summer reading slide”. In other words, some of the reading growth that students make during the school year, may actually be lost if they are not provided with summer reading opportunities. How do we avoid the summer slide? Here are a few ideas:

**Read To Your Child** - Reading aloud to children is one of the most important things to ensure their future reading success. Kids of all ages benefit from being read to. Reading to kids helps with language and speech development, expands their vocabulary, and allows them to hear the rhythm of language.

**Read for different purposes** - Read directions for a recipe, read directions for assembling a toy, or have your child read the shopping list to you as you are shopping.

**Play games with words** - *Apples to Apples*, *Scrabble*, *Dabble*, and *Blurt* are all fun family word games.

**Visit the library** - Willard library has wonderful summer reading programs for children and teens. The theme for the 2019 summer reading program is *A Universe of Stories*. For more information on this and other awesome summer opportunities visit their website at: [www.willardlibrary.org](http://www.willardlibrary.org)

**Digital Libraries** - There are some great free reading websites and apps, *Storyline Online* and *Epic!* have many high-interest titles.

**Set a Good Example** - When your child sees you reading and enjoying a good book or article, you are sending a message that reading is important and valuable. Have a happy and healthy summer! Be sure to read, read, and read some more.



## Little Free Library Update

By Kailee Fuller  
Executive Secretary Curriculum

In March we asked our community to partner with us to provide high-quality books to reach all of our Harper Creek citizens through the use of Little Free Libraries located throughout our community. Presently we have three locations identified to receive Little Free Libraries:

- Love Thy Neighbor Ministries - 1391 E Michigan Avenue
- Station 66 - 4588 D Drive S, Battle Creek, MI 49015
- Ceresco Baptist Church - 230 Marshall St, Ceresco, MI 49033



Thank you to those who partnered with us to make the Little Free Libraries a reality. We are working to add five more locations by the end of summer. Thank you to those who answered the call to donate books to our cause. We have received numerous books, but we are still in need of quality books to put in our Little Free Libraries. If you have books you would like to donate, they may be dropped off at the Harper Creek Community Schools' Administration office.

### Countdown to Kindergarten

Countdown to Kindergarten is a one hour monthly evening program for children who will be attending kindergarten in the fall of 2019 and their parents or guardians.

Thursday, May 23

Children must be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2019 in order to attend kindergarten in the fall.

For more information and to register, please call one of these schools:

**Beadle Lake Elementary** **Wattles Park Elementary** **Sonoma Elementary**  
441-3250                      441-5850                      441-7800



## Harper Creek Community Schools

### 2018-2019 District Calendar

5/17	Girls on the Run	4:30 PM Football Stadium
5/20	HS Spring Band Concert	7:00 PM HS Auditorium
5/22-23	HS Senior Exams	
5/23	Countdown to Kindergarten	6:00 PM All Elementary Buildings
5/23	HS Spring Choir Concert	7:00 PM HS Auditorium
5/24	6th Grade Rocket Launch	
5/24	HS Senior Awards Breakfast	8:00 AM HS Auditorium
5/24	HS Senior Walk and Video	10:00 AM High School
5/27	No School	
5/29	HS Senior Lunch and Graduation Practice	
5/30	MS 7th/8th grade Band Concert	7:00 PM HS Auditorium
5/30	Distinguished Alumni Awards Program	3:00 PM Board Room, HC Administration Building
5/31	High School Commencement	6:00:00 PM Football Stadium (HS Gym if raining)
6/10	Board of Education Meeting	7:00 PM Board Room, HC Administration Building
6/11	Half Day for Students	
6/12	Last Day of School, half day for students	
Please refer to our district calendar at <a href="http://www.harpercreek.net">www.harpercreek.net</a> for more events and information.		



### HARPER CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOLS School of Choice Coming Soon!

Educating, Empowering & Equipping Students for Life  
Come Grow with us!

We at HC take pride that our innovations in education meet the needs of students and families, ensuring they are ready for the world's opportunities and challenges.

Starting Monday, May 20th  
Harper Creek school of choice applications  
will be available on the website.

[www.harpercreek.net](http://www.harpercreek.net)

If you have any questions regarding our school of choice process please call 269-441-6571



## Summer Play

By Mrs. Morgan Smith, Beadle Lake Elementary PE Teacher

Summer is soon approaching and it's the perfect time to get outside and be active with your kiddos. Young people need as little as 30 minutes of exercise a day but even more is better. Regular exercise will increase muscle strength and improve student's endurance. Exercise and playing will improve brain health and memory and in turn will allow your kids to sleep better at night! Here are just a few ideas for you and your families:



- Bike rides
- Meeting friends at a local playground
- Have a picnic
- Backyard camp out
- Sidewalk chalk murals
- Zoo Trips
- Sprinklers
- Kalamazoo Valley Museum (Free)
- Water balloon baseball
- Go hiking
- Go on walks
- Family races

The most important thing is let your kids be kids. Play is a very important piece of children's development and will help them later in life in many ways. Running, dancing, climbing, rolling are all types of activities that foster muscle development and motor skills! Have a beautiful and active summer!!

## Fun Activities for STEAMy Summer Days

By Erica Jenkins, Middle School STEAM Teacher

Let's face it, sometimes in the summer we need activities to keep our kids engaged and busy in an activity that doesn't include a screen. STEAM activities, fun activities that involve science, technology, engineering, the arts and math can keep kids busy and curious. Below is a short list of activities that can be fun for the whole family.

1. **Go on nature hikes.** Look for signs of animals, identify plants, collect twigs, moss and bark for habitats or craft projects, identify plants and animals and more.
2. **Make a Nerf obstacle course.** Use what you have at home to build an obstacle course for all of those Nerf battles.
3. **Build a solar oven.** There are many designs on the internet for making solar ovens with pizza boxes. I find that s'mores work well in these. Challenge the kids to make different types of solar ovens.
4. **Make ice cream in a bag.** Making ice cream in a bag is a fun and yummy summer activity.
5. **Make giant bubbles.** Mix together different amounts of Dawn dish soap and water to compare the strength of bubbles with different amounts of soap. Wet down a smooth counter and have the kids dip a straw in solution and then try to blow the biggest bubble on the counter. This also works using coated paper plates.
6. **Run a lemonade stand.** Keep up those math skills while being an entrepreneur.
7. **Build a water wall.** Use pvc, pool noodles, old sand toys, and recycled items and attach to a chain link fence or other surface. Provide kids with water containers and buckets. A perfect activity for wearing bathing suits.
8. **Make large marble runs using pool noodles.**
9. **Build chain reactions with large craft sticks.**
10. **Experiment with super-cooled water.** Taking water bottles out of the freezer before they freeze and then banging them on a table produces "instant freezing" and yummy slush. Check out YouTube for many cool videos.

To find many more STEAM family activities with items you already have, I recommend these three blogs:

- Little Bins for Little Hands
- Frugal Fun for Boys and Girls
- The STEAM powered family

## Keep Them Reading

By Samantha Roselund, High School Media Specialist

Summer is fast-approaching and many Harper Creek High School parents are planning ahead for the next three months. Maybe a family trip is on the agenda, or that first summer job is awaiting. Agendas fill up fast, so now is a great opportunity to set aside some time for reading.

So many students put down their books on the last day of school and don't pick them up again until September. But we know from multiple educational studies that students who keep reading through the summer do better in school and are more successful, overall. So how do we keep our teens reading?



Here are some ways to encourage your teens to keep turning the pages through those humid summer days:

**Get Relevant:** a lot of YA fiction is geared toward complex issues that your child might be grappling with, personally, or may just be curious about and want to enjoy vicariously. Many YA novels deal with issues like equity and privilege, peer-pressure and emotional challenges, or crisis and self-identity. Check out lists at [ala.org/yalsa](http://ala.org/yalsa), [slj.com](http://slj.com), and [commonsensemedia.org/book-reviews](http://commonsensemedia.org/book-reviews) for great suggestions.

**Get Graphic:** graphic novels offer a world of fantastic literature accompanied by exciting artwork that can help encourage reluctant readers to get involved in the story. Don't shy away from the graphic novel sections at the library or your local book stores.

**Get Poetic:** adolescence is a great age for poetry. It's beautiful, it's emotional, and it's short! Head to [bookriot.com](http://bookriot.com), [readbrightly.com](http://readbrightly.com), and [poetrysociety.org](http://poetrysociety.org) for ideas.

**Get Disconnected:** going on a short camping trip? Heading to the lakeshore for a day in the sun? Take those opportunities to claim the time as "Family: Unplugged". When there are no cell phones, tablets, or gaming devices to distract, books can become a welcome solace. Make sure you're disconnected, too. The best way to encourage your teen to read is to model it yourself!



## Harper Creek Community School District Job Postings

Please visit [www.Harpercreek.net](http://www.Harpercreek.net) for more information and to apply



## The School Year is Over! Now What?

By Stacey DeMoss, High School Counselor

### Knowing Yourself

Quite possibly the hardest question you can ask yourself is how do I fit in career exploration and how do we still find time to enjoy our summer? Summer is a fabulous time for you to learn about different options. The thing that everybody will have in common is the search for something that will ignite their soul. College, trade school, the military etc. And it all begins with self-exploration and what better time to do this than in the lazy dog days of summer.

### Do Something Good

In real life grades do not mean a whole lot once you are past high school but kindness last a lifetime. So this summer is a great time to volunteer and give back to our community. Volunteering is a great way to gain valuable life experience, make connections, network and it looks great on applications. It is also a great way to once again to find out what ignites your soul! A great website to explore volunteer opportunities is [www.Handsonbc.org](http://www.Handsonbc.org).

### Show Me The Money

Summer is a great time to get a part time summer job and to save some money. Some high school jobs can be tedious and not very interesting, your job may not relate to the career you want. However, the soft skills like communication, perseverance, attendance and diligence will be valuable tools to have in your tool box.

### What's in Your Circle

Summer is a great time to begin working on that one good essay. Do not panic when writing your essay—simply tell your story. Picture yourself 10 years from now. How do you see yourself? What is important to you? Make a circle—what is inside your circle? Family, money, work, fun? How do you see yourself and how do others see you?

### Having Fun Is the Best Way to Learn

Although summer is a time we want to get recharged, relax and soak up some fun, it is also an excellent way for students to gain some valuable experiences. So where do you begin? Write down some goals. What do you enjoy doing? The key is the more you know the more educated you will be in finding your path and for all the parents—just be secure in knowing most students will find their path and it is OK if we do not have the same path because ultimately we have the same end goal.



**Harper Creek Community Schools**

**NOW HIRING**

We are hiring passionate individuals who have a desire to work with children and seek a flexible schedule.

Open positions include:

- \*Bus Drivers
- Substitute Classroom Assistants
- Substitute Lunch/Recess Supervisors
- Substitute Teachers

**HCC** EDUCATE • EMPOWER • EQUIP  
Students for Life

\*\$500 signing bonus

[www.harpercreek.net](http://www.harpercreek.net) or 269.441.6567 for more details

**Harper Creek Community Schools**

**2019-2020 District Calendar**

August 19	Teacher Professional Development Day
August 20	Breakfast, Welcome Back HCEA and Staff
August 21	First School Day
August 30	No School
September 2	No School
November 15	½ Day Students; ½ Day Teacher : PD - MS & HS, Records - Elementary
November 27	½ Day Students and Teachers
November 28 & 29	No School
December 19	½ Day Students; ½ Day Teacher PD
December 20	½ Day students; ½ Day Teacher: Records- MS & HS, PD – Elementary
December 23 – January 3	No School
January 20	No School Students; Teacher PD
February 14	No School Students; Teacher PD
February 17	No School; Comp Day - Contingent on State requirements met
March 13	No School Students; Teacher PD
April 3	No School – Comp Day- Contingent on State requirements met
April 6 – April 10	No School
May 25	No School
June 1	½ Day Students; ½ Day Teacher Records
June 2	½ Day Students; Last Day of School

**OK2SAY**  
Stop the Silence. Help End the Violence.

All of us can be the eyes and ears of the community and ensure that our children are safe. Everyone—students, staff, parents, and community members—is encouraged to report potentially harmful or criminal acts using OK2SAY.

To submit a confidential tip:

- Call 855-565-2729
- Text 652729 (OK2SAY)
- Email [ok2say@mi.gov](mailto:ok2say@mi.gov)
- Download the Mobile App search OK2SAY
- Visit the OK2SAY website at [www.ok2say.com](http://www.ok2say.com)

**Harper Creek Educational Foundation**  
*Give • Grow • Achieve*  
[www.bccfoundation.org/fund/hccsef](http://www.bccfoundation.org/fund/hccsef)

The Harper Creek Educational Foundation's sole purpose is to generate and distribute resources to Harper Creek Community Schools for scholarships, enrichment programs, and other projects aimed at enhancing the quality of education. If you would like to donate to this philanthropic organization, learn more about its mission and goals, or join the movement by volunteering, call 269.441.6555.