

# HARPER CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOLS *Newsletter*



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

**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS**

- Beau Bess, *President*
- Lisa Hubbard, *Vice President*
- Tim Martin, *Secretary*
- Don Myers, *Treasurer*
- Dr. Dale Borders, *Trustee*
- Summer Gooch, *Trustee*
- Jason Smith, *Trustee*

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

- Rob Ridgeway, *Superintendent*
- Laura Williams, *Asst. Superintendent of Instruction*
- Dennis Anthony, *High School*
- Kim Thayer, *Middle School*
- Nneka Daniels, *Beadle Lake Elementary*
- Shalen King-Short, *Sonoma Elementary*
- Brent Swan, *Wattles Park Elementary*
- Gail Braman, *Schools of Choice*
- Tammy Chapman, *Human Resources*
- Carol Davis, *Finance*
- Ed Greenman, *Athletics*
- Stacy Hendon, *Transportation*
- Jim Maynard, *Technology*
- Jim Robinson, *Facilities*
- Rebecca Schneider, *Communications*

**SCHOOL DISTRICT CONTACT INFORMATION**

7454 B Drive North  
Battle Creek, MI 49014  
Telephone: 269.441.6550  
Fax: 269.962.6034  
Website: www.harpercreek.net  
Facebook: Harper Creek Schools  
Twitter: Harper Creek Schools

**NEWSLETTER CONTACT INFORMATION**

Rebecca Schneider  
schneiderr@harpercreek.net

**In This Issue...**

Message from the Superintendent ..... 1

Back to School at Wattles Park Elementary ... 1

Welcome Back to Beadle Lake Elementary... 1

Restoring, Reconstructing, and Redesigning School ..... 2

HCMS Construction Project is Complete! ..... 2

Congratulations Harper Creek Class of 2020 .. 3

In Times of Certainty – LEAD with Heart..... 4

Feeding the Children of Harper Creek and the Greater Battle Creek Area ..... 4

HCCS Calendar of Events..... 4

Annual Notifications..... 4

## Message from the Superintendent

On July 31, 2020 from 5:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M. we held commencement programs in the HC Stadium for the Class of 2020. It was a graduation unlike any other in the history of Harper Creek Community Schools. It may have been two months past the original scheduled date, but we recognized and celebrated these amazing young adults.

In small groups, our graduates marched across the on-field stage in front of handfuls of family and friends. There was no band playing Pomp and Circumstance, there were no large crowds filling the stands, there was no united turning of the tassels. Nonetheless, there was great honor and pride. Commencement may have been small in size but great in significance.

Like the *Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, Covid-19 may have taken away the bells and whistles of commencement, but it did not take away the celebration. It may not have been a traditional ceremony, but the commemoration of accomplishment was no less. I count myself privileged to have witnessed the triumph of these history-making graduates.

Perhaps we can take our cues for the new school year from the Class of 2020. Perhaps we, too, can find meaning and success in the new school year with patience, resilience, and grace. We are never too old to learn lessons - even from those much younger than ourselves. Here's to the Class of 2020!

**Rob Ridgeway, Superintendent**

*JOY*, a *HEART* for *PEOPLE*, and *BELIEF* in *YOURSELF*.

EDUCATE • EMPOWER • EQUIP  
**STUDENTS FOR LIFE**

## Back to School at Wattles Park Elementary

By Brent Swan, Principal, Wattles Park Elementary

The staff at Wattles Park is eager to begin a new year with our students. We know this year will be different in how we connect and build relationships with our students, but our mission to Educate, Empower and Equip students for life remains the same, regardless if we are face to face or in a remote learning format. The theme at Wattles Park Elementary this year is, **Strength and Courage**. Students and staff will begin our work from a strength-based model to find success for all. Our staff will emphasize students' areas of strength and use those areas to draw on their efficacy and resiliency to meet new challenges. The circle of courage model of Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity will be a great way to frame our work with children that might be coming with increased trauma needs from the pandemic and the racial strife our country has been going through. Our Wattles Park family will work through every challenge to meet the needs of our students.



## Welcome Back Families!

By Nneka Daniels, Principal, Beadle Lake Elementary

Welcome back families! Let's kick off this school year with the three R's: Restoring, Reconstructing, and Redesigning. When I think of these concepts I think of words like; return, repair, and rebuild. These are all the things that we need to do to help students transition into the school year smoothly. The last few months have been challenging for everyone, but more so for our young people. This fall, we will return in whatever form that is allowable, but really need to think about all the supports that we can offer to students as they return. How can we restore their joy? Simple supports like greeting students at the door, a little extra time to talk, words of encouragement, and big smiles.

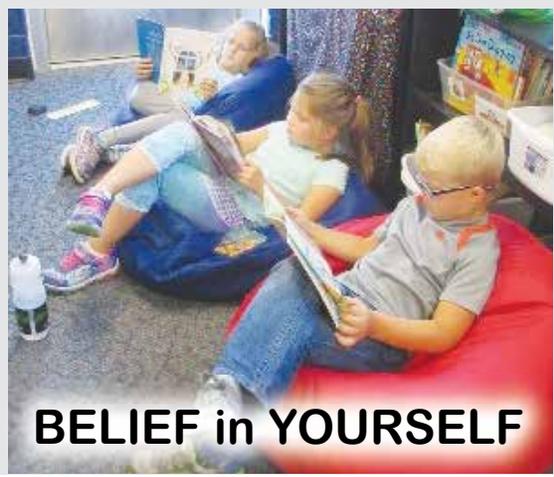
How can we repair the gaps that come when students are away from school for long periods of time? Lead with a "belief in self".

Assess where students are. What do I already know? What do I need to know that I don't know? Design intentional instruction to focus on areas of needs, but also use student's strengths to lift them up and build confidence.

How do we rebuild in uncertain times? We rebuild one step at a time; remembering that learning is at the forefront and the learner is the guide. We rebuild with a "heart for people"; recognizing that flexibility is the key. We are embarking on a journey this year that is unlike any other that we have experienced; so we must remember to rebuild with grace. We must be the models for our children.



HEART  
for  
PEOPLE  
 BLE



**BELIEF** in **YOURSELF**



## Restoring, Reconstructing, and Redesigning School

By Shalen King-Short, Principal, Sonoma Elementary

What a summer it has been! We are very excited about beginning this new school year. The last few months have been different for all of our families and community. At Sonoma we are working to redesign how we use our space to support students. We are doing this with the help of the community. Victory Life Church came to Sonoma to help us construct an outdoor classroom space where we will be able to support students' learning outside. They provided and built seating, painted our sand boxes on the playground, and made some raised bed gardens where we will be creating sensory gardens this fall and spring. We are working to restore our bodies and minds by moving some learning outside and redesigning how we teach authentically about the world around us here at Sonoma. Thank you to Victory Life Church for their outreach and support. We are looking forward to seeing everyone soon!



## HCMS Construction Project is Complete!

By Kim Thayer, Principal, Middle School

Fall is always an exciting time for learning, full of unlimited possibilities! I am pleased to welcome you back to the 2020-21 school year. Your Harper Creek Middle School team is working together to provide our students with a rich learning environment, both in person and virtual. As always, our focus is on building meaningful relationships, rigorous learning, and safety.

During the time we were away from the building, a new vestibule project was completed at our main entrance. This safety project was made possible through a grant from the Michigan State Police. There is now a second set of doors that will steer anyone entering the building through the main office. A school is safest when there is one dedicated entrance and that entrance is secured with a vestibule.

Mr. O'Farrell and I are excited to get back to school. We are looking forward to meeting our new families and reconnecting with our returning families.





# Congratulations to the Harper Creek Class of 2020

**By Dennis Anthony, Principal, Harper Creek High School**

The Commencement Ceremony finally arrived for the Harper Class of 2020! Participants were reminded that even though the ceremony was not the traditional ceremony due to following health and safety guidelines, they were there to celebrate the journey of several years and not just a ceremony.

Graduates in small groups were joined by their immediate family and members of the HCCS administration and Board of Education. The event was livestreamed, broadcast on FM 87.9, and later edited to provide a compilation of the entire event.

Prerecorded student speeches were provided by Senior Class Representatives Brenna Miller and Allison Graham, and Salutatorian Julian Warner. Superintendent Rob Ridgeway, Board of Education President Beau Bess and Principal Dennis Anthony shared words with the graduates as well.

Mr. Anthony reflected on 4 years earlier speaking to the class of 2020 as 9th graders, challenging them “to do better, and to be better while in HS to prepare for a world that would look very different in the future. We didn’t imagine that would come true even before you walked across this stage.” He continued, “These are challenging times. But I believe that you... will replace my generation to meet these challenges. I hope you do better than we have done and I believe in the wisdom of the saying that a society grows great when one generation plants trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in.” He concluded by encouraging them to choose carefully where they plant themselves and “find who and what will nourish you so no matter how difficult the winds of life blow, you will stand tall, firmly planted and not easily broken....Only when you are rooted in such a place can you continue to learn and grow so that you are always prepared to succeed in a world that is both uncertain and beautiful.”

Congratulations to the HCHS Class of 2020!





## In Times of Certainty – LEAD with Heart

By Laura Williams, Assistant Superintendent

As we round out the summer moving into August and the start of school, we find ourselves with more questions than answers, which seems to be the root of the tension in homes, workplaces and communities overall. Uncertainty summons stress and stress has the potential to tear down even the strongest relationships. The challenge before us is to regularly check in on the health of our relationships with all of those we engage with throughout the day. We can make a difference with every interaction. Do we leave people feeling better or worse after each interaction? That is the question to ask ourselves several times a day. If we are showing heart for all people we will pave a solid learning foundation for ALL to occur both at home and in school.

If we allow the uncertainties of today's times to negatively impact those we love, work with, and live around, we can soon struggle to feel hope and joy. It is for this reason that in education we always have to be thinking about the whole child. Constantly monitoring not only academic growth and proficiency but equally, if not more importantly, monitoring the social-emotional growth of our learners. At Harper Creek Community Schools we are working collectively to identify the structures and lessons we need to ensure the learning environment is full of high-quality relationships where everyone feels they truly belong. I challenge myself and everyone in our Harper Creek Community to ask ourselves one question at the end of each interaction throughout the day. **What did I do to help the person I just talked with feel seen and to feel like they are important and belong?** I am confident if we each went into every interaction knowing we would be reflective on this certainty, we would be more present. Our children of all ages are watching how we interact with them and with others. Please be mindful, school may not be in session right now but our children are learning from the interactions they are a part of or a witness to.

In closing, young eyes are watching how we show up in difficult times. Let's make sure we are modeling the character we want our children to develop as they witness.

A quote I am holding in my heart during this time is: *"When nothing is sure, Everything is Possible."* by Margaret Drabble.

## Feeding the Children of Harper Creek and the Greater Battle Creek Area

By Rebecca Schneider, Communication Director

When the Executive Order to close schools came March 12, a component of the order was ensuring students would continue to be fed. Chef John Ruemenapp, Harper Creek Director of Dining Services, and his team began planning how to feed a district that spans eighty-five square miles. After the 2019-20 school year ended, so did the initial food program but was immediately replaced by the summer Meet Up and Eat Up program. Meet Up and Eat Up, more commonly known as the Summer Food Service Program, was created to ensure kids in need would still receive good nutrition once the school year ended.

Since March, Meet Up and Eat Up has been providing meals for kids at 10 sites in the Harper Creek Community School District. Meals are offered 3 days a week. In addition to the meals prepared by Chef Ruemenapp and his team, Farmers to Families Food Box program was added to our food distribution sites. Farmers to Families Food Box program was created as part of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program to provide dairy and produce to families from food distributors that would normally supply restaurants, hotels, and other foodservice businesses. The boxes have contained a bounty of fresh vegetables and dairy products. Another program that contributes to help feed the children in our area is Love Thy Neighbor Ministries. Throughout the year LTN provides bags of food every Friday to students who qualify. LTN continued providing food bags through the summer, working with Chef John to add to the food the kids receive.

Chef John frequently offers special treats for the kids, offering fresh fruit, hot dogs, and the ever-popular pizza day.

"We are grateful for Chef Ruemenapp and his team's dedication to provide meals for the kids of Harper Creek and the surrounding area. They have worked tirelessly to ensure nutritious food is available during this time of uncertainty." Robert Ridgeway, Superintendent

The Meet Up and Eat Up program ends August 25 at which time Chef Ruemenapp will seamlessly transition their focus to feeding the students in the Harper Creek Community School District.

## HCCS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 26.....	First Day of School
September 4 – 7.....	No School
October 16.....	No School
November 13.....	Half Day
November 25.....	Half Day
December 21-January 1.....	Winter Break
January 14-15.....	Half Days
February 19.....	No School
February 26.....	Half Day
April 2.....	No School
April 5-9.....	Spring Break
May 31.....	No School
June 4.....	Half Day
June 7.....	Last Day of School

Elementary Grading Terms	
T1	08/26/20 – 11/20/20
T2	11/23/20 – 02/19/21
T3	02/22/21 – 06/07/21

Middle School Grading Terms	
Q1	08/26/20 – 10/30/20
Q2	11/02/20 – 01/15/21
S1	08/26/20 – 01/15/21
Q3	01/18/21 – 03/19/21
Q4	03/22/21 – 06/07/21
S2	01/18/21 – 06/07/21

High School Grading Terms	
S1	08/26/20 – 01/15/21
S2	01/18/21 – 06/07/21



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:                            | • Download the Mobile App search OK2SAY  |
| • Call 855-565-2729                                      | • Visit the OK2SAY website at <a href="http://www.ok2say.com">www.ok2say.com</a> |
| • Text 652729 (OK2SAY)                                   |  |
| • Email <a href="mailto:ok2say@mi.gov">ok2say@mi.gov</a> |  |



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.

### NON DISCRIMINATION

Harper Creek Community Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation or transgender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes") in its educational programs or activities.

The Board also does not discriminate on the basis of Protected Classes in its employment policies and practices as they relate to students, and does not tolerate harassment of any kind.

Equal educational opportunities shall be available to all students, without regard to the Protected Classes, age (unless age is a factor necessary to the normal operation or the achievement of any legitimate objective of the program/activity), place of residence within the boundaries of the District, or social or economic background, to learn through the curriculum offered in this District. Educational programs shall be designed to meet the varying needs of all students. For more information on this policy and all Harper Creek Community Schools policies at [www.neola.com/harpercreek-mi/](http://www.neola.com/harpercreek-mi/)

### STUDENT PRIVACY AND PARENTAL ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Harper Creek Board of Education respects the privacy rights of parents and their children. No student shall be required, as a part of the school program or the District's curriculum, without prior written consent of the student (if an adult, or an emancipated minor) or, if an unemancipated minor, his/her parents, to submit to or participate in any survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning: political affiliations or beliefs; mental or psychological issues; sex behavior or attitudes; illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating or demeaning behavior; critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships; legally recognized privileged relationships; religious practices, affiliations or beliefs; or income

Further, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, a survey or evaluation created by a third party before the survey/evaluation is administered or distributed by the school to the student. The parent will have access to the survey/evaluation within a reasonable period of time after the request is received by the building principal.

Additionally, parents have the right to inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum of the student, including reproductive health and family planning programs. The term does not include academic tests or assessments. For more information on this policy and all Harper Creek Community Schools policies at [www.neola.com/harpercreek-mi/](http://www.neola.com/harpercreek-mi/)

### INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)

Harper Creek Community Schools operates a pest management program in accordance with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Integrated Pest Management (IPM). This program shall also include implementation of an IPM awareness program. All persons applying pesticides on District property shall hold appropriate State certification and be approved by the District IPM Coordinator. Parents may request submit a request for prior notification of pesticide application by submitting a written request sent to the attention of Jim Robinson, Facilities Director, 7454 B Drive N, Battle Creek, MI 49014. Forms are available on the District Website or from any school office.

### NOTIFICATION

Parents/Guardians have the right to request notification before any pesticide application is made to school property. In case of emergency,

- Pest control services will be provided in the District on the first Tuesday of each month, or as needed.

For more information on this policy and all Harper Creek Community Schools policies at [www.neola.com/harpercreek-mi/](http://www.neola.com/harpercreek-mi/)

### BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS

As required by Federal law, parents will be requested to have their child's blood checked for HIV, HBV, and other blood-borne pathogens when the child has bled at school and students or staff members have been exposed to the blood. Any testing is subject to laws protecting confidentiality. For more information on this policy and all Harper Creek Community Schools policies at [www.neola.com/harpercreek-mi/](http://www.neola.com/harpercreek-mi/)

### USE OF TOBACCO

Harper Creek Community Schools prohibits the use of tobacco products on District premises (owned or leased), in District vehicles, at all school sponsored events and in all school buildings owned and/or operated by the District

### WEAPON-FREE ZONE

Federal law establishes a Weapon-Free Zone that extends 1,000 feet from the boundary of any school property.

## 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

\*600 signing bonus

www.harpercreek.net or 269-441-6567 for more details