

Hudsonville Public Schools

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March 12, 2020

Dear Hudsonville Families,

We are incredibly proud of our staff's hard work and commitment to our students and families during these unsettling times. Additionally, we are thankful for your patience and flexibility as we endeavor to keep our students safe and our families informed through this ever-evolving situation. We continue to partner with the Ottawa County Department of Public Health (OCDPH) and the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District's COVID-19 Response Team to make decisions to support the safety, health, and well-being of all our students and staff. Your continued patience and flexibility during this unprecedented time is deeply appreciated.

Based on the recommendations of these agencies and those put forth by Governor Whitmer, our immediate plan for mitigating the spread of COVID-19 in our communities while advancing student learning is based on three factors: (1) avoiding the unnecessary exposure of our staff and students to illness, (2) working to the best of our ability to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning within Hudsonville and in the Ottawa area, and (3) protecting the health and well-being of our multigenerational community, especially those who are most vulnerable to illness.

The recommendations put forth by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services for community groups and organizations include canceling or postponing large gatherings or athletic events with more than 100 people in attendance. We will be taking the following steps beginning today, March 12, 2020, until we are given clearance to resume normal activities. To be clear, each of these preventative measures are being taken so that we can resume our normal school operations.

1. Along with other schools in our region, **Hudsonville Public Schools will work toward reducing group sizes during the instructional day** (e.g., lunch periods, large group gathering spaces, etc.) **as well as cancel or postpone community events that are scheduled to take place before spring break.** We recognize that each situation will need to be evaluated individually. Please keep in mind that we are operating in a fast-evolving situation that changes nearly by the hour.
2. **All athletic events will follow MHSAA recommendations.** Banquets will be postponed. We will continue to monitor spring sports. Practices for extracurricular activities will continue as scheduled, until further notice. Group sizes will be monitored to follow the recommendation of 100 or less people gathered together in a confined space.
3. All scheduled **field trips prior to spring break will be canceled/rescheduled.** Additionally, all building-level organized events such as skating parties, dances, etc. that are scheduled prior to spring break are also canceled/rescheduled.
4. At this time, **Hudsonville Public Schools' facilities will be open to school personnel and students only.** We do apologize for this, as we are limiting volunteers or individuals not directly employed by the school district to attend or participate in any school-related events as a way to limit the spread of the virus. This will include programs such as Girls on the Run, Total Trek Quest, Boys Scouts & Girls Scouts, etc.
5. Community Education rentals, activities, and classes are canceled until spring break.
6. There will also be a **reduction in staff attending outside conferences** in order to minimize potential exposure to our staff and students.

The spread of COVID-19 is a fast-evolving situation that changes hour by hour. The Ottawa County Department of Public Health recommends schools **operate as usual** until directed otherwise. Therefore:

1. School will remain in session as regularly scheduled.
2. At this time, we will continue to operate Eagles' Nest as it is currently scheduled.
3. Please follow the recommendations to wash your hands, stay home when you are sick, and practice good hygiene.

While adult and higher education institutions may already offer or are able to transition to online coursework, the primary form of instructional delivery for most pre-K-12 students is largely face-to-face. In the event of a school closing, we are committed to providing quality learning experiences for students and are working to determine which educational resources could continue to be available to parents and students during the interim.

While we are working closely with local agencies on prevention strategies, HPS, area school boards and superintendents will base school closing decisions on the recommendation of the OCDPH. Please understand that notification regarding school closings will be from district authorities. Social media and local media can often be misinformed, so please use our website (<https://www.hudsonvillepublicschools.org/updates>) for accurate information and updates. **Please plan on school remaining in session unless you hear otherwise from me.**

As we prepare for all possible scenarios, we are asking you to develop a plan for your family in the event schools were to close for an extended period of time. We are taking COVID-19 very seriously and hope that with your help we can mitigate the spread of this virus in the Ottawa County region.

Sincerely,



Doug VanderJagt, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools