

# Hudsonville Public Schools

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June 11, 2020

Dear Parents,

I truly hope the start of your summer has been enjoyable. Now that the school year is officially over, there are a few important topics to review. I want to take a moment to thank you for your patience and support as we navigate this challenging time. Your dedication to your children and our school system is what makes Hudsonville the amazing community that it is. I know there are several questions regarding next fall, and we will continue to seek your feedback as we plan for students to be in our buildings to start the school year.

Last week, we sent a survey asking a few questions regarding your intent to send your child back to school in our current situation. The feedback you provided (3,400 responses) was very informative and continues to help us lay the groundwork for a successful start to school next fall. I can also assure you that we have the same intentions of returning back to school, in the traditional fashion. I know there have been questions regarding the CDC guidelines and other recommendations by our state government. Please be assured that we will be taking these guidelines (not requirements) into consideration as we develop a plan that provides a safe (physically and mentally) environment for all students. We invite you to take this next [survey](#) to continue to provide feedback. Your answers will inform our plans related to mental health, childcare options, transportation, and other relevant topics. This [survey](#) will remain open until Wednesday, June 17. While planning for students to be physically in our buildings in the fall, we know we must also create a more robust remote learning plan for students who may need to take that avenue. Our task force continues to explore options for schooling in the fall, and we expect to provide those details to our community in early July.

As you are well aware, our nation is in a delicate place as we watch protests unfolding around the world, shedding light on the racial injustices in our country. The Board of Education of Hudsonville Public Schools recognizes the inequities experienced by African Americans from the founding of our country through the present time. We will continue to strive to inform our student population about those inequities as we work towards our mission of inspiring all learners to become contributing, responsible members of a global society. As our school leader, I want to share that I am actively and intentionally focusing on personal anti-racism work, and am dedicated to equity and accountability for all of our students, families, and staff. To our African American families, Hudsonville Public Schools sees you, we hear you, and we stand with you. For all of our families, we recognize how challenging it can be to talk through racial issues with your children and want to provide some resources to support you. I would encourage you to access the resources from the [American Psychological Association](#), and more specifically, their [Parent Tip Tool](#). My hope is that these resources will provide a guide in assisting you with having these conversations with your children. We encourage you and our entire community to join us in educating our children as we strive to create change in our community and our global society around racial equity.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent actions to protect public health, school budgets are facing steep cuts. Given the severity of the funding reductions, we need your support in protecting the future of our schools. For the current 2019-20 school year, the state's School Aid Fund is more than \$1.25 billion short of what was expected when the Michigan Legislature passed the budget last year. This equates to roughly \$700 per student or a nearly \$5 million funding cut to Hudsonville Public Schools alone. Similar budget shortfalls are also projected for the coming school years. We ask for your help as we partner with public school districts throughout West Michigan. We have launched a grassroots online advocacy tool that makes it easy for you to send a message to the President and members of Congress. Please take a few minutes to advocate on behalf of our students by visiting [ourkidsfuturemi.com](#). You can also show your support by following on Facebook (Our Kids' Future - Michigan) and Twitter (@ourkidsfutureMi). Be sure to share this information with your networks! We can make a difference together.

I wish you all a wonderful summer and please know we will continue to work diligently to prepare for school in the fall. Please continue to stay informed by visiting our [website](#) with the most current return to school information. We intend to send additional communication during the summer in attempts to keep you informed of the important work that we continue to do throughout this constantly changing world. Thank you again for your commitment to our amazing district, as without your support, we would not be able to SOAR!

Sincerely,



Doug VanderJagt, Ph.D.  
Superintendent