

Hudsonville Public Schools

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July 15, 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope your summer has been enjoyable, albeit probably different than we all expected it to be. The weather has been quite nice, so I hope you have had the opportunity to appreciate this time with family. Traditionally our district leaders spend the summertime discussing long-range planning and updating policies and procedures. This summer has been quite the opposite, as we seek to create learning plans and safety plans for staff and students, all doing so with an ever-changing landscape. Please know that while our plans for the fall continue to evolve, we are working extremely hard within the confines of our state orders to provide the safest environment for our staff and students. We remain optimistic that students will be present for face-to-face learning in the fall, and the requirements that our state government has placed on our district will be manageable for both staff and students. Please know that we (along with every other school district in the state) are required to follow executive orders issued by the state, and we appreciate your understanding regarding these restrictions placed upon us.

As a reminder for what transpired on June 30, Governor Whitmer issued [Executive Order 20-142](#), which requires all schools/districts (public, private, parochial, and charter) to provide Safe Start Plans for reopening schools in the fall. Currently, our region (2) of Michigan is in phase 4 of the [Safe Start Plan](#). However, Hudsonville Public Schools is in the process of creating plans for all of the phases outlined in the Governor's Safe Schools Return to School Roadmap. Specifically, Hudsonville Public Schools will have plans ready should we remain in phase 4, improve to phase 5, or even if we roll-back to phase 3. Our district return-to-school task force has been working through this state-mandated guidance and will be sharing these plans with parents in early August. This Executive Order does require our Board of Education to review the plan, and they will be doing so in August. Below are highlights of each phase that we must address.

PHASE 3

- School buildings are closed to anyone except:
 - District employees or contractors necessary to conduct minimum basic operations
 - Food service workers preparing food for distribution to students or their families
 - Licensed child-care providers
- The following activities are suspended: athletics, after-school activities, inter-school activities, and busing.
- While in person instruction will cease, teaching and learning will continue through alternate means. These alternative modes of instruction may include: partnerships with other schools, ISDs, community colleges, or higher education institutes; use of vendors, online learning, telephones, email, virtual instruction, videos, or instructional packets; or a hybrid of multiple modes of learning that promotes social distancing practices to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
- The continuation of food distribution to eligible students.

PHASE 4

- Require face coverings for:
 - All staff and students grades PK-12 when on a school bus and in hallways and indoor common areas
 - All staff and students grades 6 and up when in classrooms
 - All students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5 unless students remain with their classes throughout the day and do not come into close contact with students in another class
- Prohibit indoor assemblies that include more than one classroom; and
- Incorporate the Roadmap's required protocols for hygiene, cleaning, athletics, screening, testing protocols, food service, and busing.

While Phase 4 permits Hudsonville Public Schools to resume in-person learning, districts retain the authority to enact strict public health requirements and close school buildings even if they have not been mandated to do so.

PHASE 5

- Most of the requirements in phase 4 (above) become recommendations, thus allowing the flexibility for Hudsonville Public Schools to create plans that meet our needs.

HPS administrators and staff have been busy planning for these phases. As I shared at the end of June, Governor Whitmer released her [Return to School Roadmap](#), which outlines requirements for each public and parochial school across the state to follow. Again, at this time, based on our current statewide Phase 4 status, Hudsonville Public Schools is prepared to offer two options for our families this fall.

- Option 1 - We will be fully prepared to offer face-to-face instruction, following the guidelines set forth by the Governor.
or
- Option 2 - 100% ONLINE learning for our students whose families are not yet ready to send their child back to school while the pandemic is still active.

For families who want their students face-to-face in the fall, we have developed plans including parent, student, teacher, and district leader input to ensure our face to face instruction is safe and provides opportunities for each and every student to excel in their current grade-level content and continue their social and emotional growth as well.

For families who are reluctant to send their child back to school while the pandemic is still active, we are offering a 100% online learning opportunity for your child to ensure they excel in their current grade-level content. This online learning experience will provide daily synchronous (live) and asynchronous (recorded or assigned) instruction. Students will receive regular feedback on their progress in learning and grades from an assigned teacher. Eligible students will continue to have access to special education services, English Language services, and intervention supports in the remote learning option. Parents that choose this path for their student(s) will remain in the path for a set period of time (i.e., until the end of the trimester/semester/year). If you are interested in the online learning experience, [please complete this form](#). Parents who complete the form will receive additional updates as we finalize the 100% online learning experience. We will continue to refine our back to school and 100% online learning plans in the coming weeks and keep all of our families informed.

One of the most discussed topics surrounds the requirement of wearing masks at school. Please understand that Hudsonville Public Schools, along with every other school in the state, is required to follow this executive order. Summer is a great time to practice wearing a mask, so students are more comfortable in the fall. While we suggest students bring their own mask, one that they are comfortable wearing, we will provide masks for those that forget or don't have access to one.

I want to personally thank you for your patience as we work through this together. Throughout the summer, we have several district leaders and various staff members working a great deal on our plan for kids to return in the fall. I want to thank them for their countless hours and sometimes thankless job. I want to especially thank our Board of Education for their extra time and support as we chart this course for the future of our district. These individuals continue to provide guidance and feedback regarding our return to school plan and always have the best interest of our students throughout this journey. If you see any of these Board members in our community, please thank them for all their time and commitment to your children:

Ken Hall, President
Mark Davis, Vice-President
Dawn Sneden, Secretary
Steve Bowerman, Treasurer
Larry Kapenga, Asst. Secretary/Treasurer
Barb Hooper, Trustee
Chad Tuttle, Trustee

Enjoy the last couple of weeks of July and look for additional updates as we get closer to August. We plan to hold multiple town-hall meetings in early August to provide as much clarity as possible regarding our return to school plan. For now, please be safe, and please stay healthy.

Sincerely,



Doug VanderJagt, Ph.D.
Superintendent