

HARPER CREEK SCHOOLS *Newsletter*



EDUCATE • EMPOWER • EQUIP
Students for Life

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- Shalen King-Short, *Sonoma Elementary*
- Brent Swan, *Wattles Park Elementary*

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Message from the Superintendent

The rumors are true—Harper Creek Community Schools will be starting before Labor Day next school year. The first day of the 2019-20 school year will be Wednesday, August 21, 2019. While the school calendar is changing, our school day hours will remain the same. Harper Creek Community Schools will not be alone in an early-start calendar—most Calhoun County school districts will also begin in August.

The early start calendar benefits students and families in several important ways. Moving the school calendar allows students to complete a full semester before leaving on winter break—thus maintaining content mastery and freeing students from study over vacation. In addition, the early-start calendar aligns Harper Creek Community Schools with colleges and universities for dual-enrollment and early-middle college opportunities.

In addition, many of our students are already in the buildings in early August—participating in extra- and co-curricular activities. Marching band and fall sport programs feature practices, games, and competitions prior to the start of the school. This calendar brings these activities in alignment with the school year—a win-win for all.

While the full calendar is not yet available, we can tell you that winter break 2019 will be celebrated December 23, 2019 through January 3, 2020, and spring break 2020 will be celebrated April 6, 2020 through April 10, 2020. We will promptly send out the full calendar once it has been confirmed. As we work hand-in-hand with the Harper Creek Education Association to develop a full calendar, our focus will remain on what is best for students.

Sincerely,
Rob Ridgeway
Superintendent

EDUCATE • EMPOWER • EQUIP
STUDENTS FOR LIFE

Sonoma Elementary—A Busy Place to Be

By Shalen King-Short, Principal

Bricks 4 Kids

Girls and boys from kindergarten to fourth grade stay after school on Tuesdays from 4 to 5 p.m., and they are not just playing with Legos. They are partnering up, given a set of plans, and building anything from dinosaurs to kitchen appliances and beyond.

Students are currently working on the *Interesting Inventions* theme. The students have built a conveyor belt, a hand mixer, a sewing machine, a typewriter, windshield wipers, and a turnstile. The hour starts with a presentation where we discuss how and why the invention is important and how it is used in our everyday lives. They wash their hands and desks and are provided a step-by-step plan on what they are building that day. This is sometimes a hard copy on paper—and sometimes the iPad. All creations have a battery and motor so the students can see their work in action! After they have finished building, they pull apart what they built and put it away. This teaches the students organizational skills and responsibilities. The children then free build from a box of Legos for the rest of the hour.

This program is led by Mr. Chintalapati (Mr. C) and is a great start for beginning engineers!

Fire Safety and Prevention Week

Sonoma participated in Fire Safety and Prevention Week. Firefighters came to school and participated during the fire drill. In addition, kindergarten students had the opportunity to try on uniforms and firefighter gear.

Curriculum Night and Sonoma Glow Run

Sonoma hosted a curriculum night. Parents came to meet with their child's teachers to learn about what they will be working on this year. This year t-shirts were provided to all students attending the event—a total of 106 student t-shirts! Following curriculum night was the Sonoma Glow Run, where families and students used the Sonoma Elementary walking track and collected glow bracelets for every lap. There was a great turn out with over 200 participants, including teachers and families, with music and fun! A big thank you to teacher Christine Valenzuela and the high school students involved for the hard work and dedication to creating a healthy environment for Sonoma families.

Station 66 Hayride and dinner

Sonoma PTA put on a hayride and dinner at Station 66. Although the weather did not cooperate, many families participated in the dinner. Thank you to our PTA for working to support our students and families!



• 2018-2019 HARPER CREEK DISTRICT CALENDAR •

11/15	MS Conferences	3 - 7 p.m.
11/16	Half Day for Students	HS - 10:50 a.m./MS 10:44 a.m./EL 11:55 a.m.
11/19	Charitable Union Winter Coat Drive Begins	All Buildings
11/20	SO Parent/Teacher Conferences	4 - 6 p.m.
11/21	Half Day for Students and Staff	HS - 10:50 a.m./MS 10:44 a.m./EL 11:55 a.m.
11/22 - 11/23	Thanksgiving Break - No School	
11/26	Board of Education Workshop Meeting	7 p.m. Administration Board Room
11/27	SO Parent/Teacher Conferences	4 - 7 p.m.
11/29	SO Parent/Teacher Conferences	4 - 7 p.m.
11/30	Charitable Union Winter Coat Drive Ends	All Buildings
12/3	Special Board of Education Meeting	5 - 8 p.m. Administration Board Room
12/3	HS Prado Choir Concert	7 p.m. HS Auditorium
12/4	MS Student Council Meeting	2:45 - 3:45 p.m.
12/5	MS NJHS General Membership Meeting	2:45 - 3:30 p.m.
12/6	SO 3rd/4th Holiday Musical Program	7 p.m. HS Auditorium
12/7	HS Fall Play "Peter and the Starcatcher"	7 p.m. HS Auditorium
12/8	HS Fall Play "Peter and the Starcatcher"	7 p.m. HS Auditorium
12/9	HS Fall Play "Peter and the Starcatcher"	2 p.m. HS Auditorium
12/10	HS Honors Choir Performance for MARSF	Noon Tech Center
12/10	Board of Education Meeting	7 p.m. Administration Board Room
12/11	MS 7/8 Holiday Band Concert	7 p.m. HS Auditorium
12/12	MS 5/6 Student of the Month Breakfast	7:15 a.m. MS Library
12/13	MS 7/8 Student of the Month Breakfast	7:15 a.m. MS Library
12/14	HS Boot 'em to the Curb Fundraiser	8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
12/17	HS Winter Band Concert	7 p.m. HS Auditorium
12/18	MS 5/6 Holiday Band Concert	7 p.m. HS Auditorium
12/19	HS Blood Drive	8 a.m. - 2 p.m.
12/19	SO PTA Meeting	6 p.m.
12/19	MS 5-8 Holiday Choir Concert	7 p.m. HS Auditorium
12/20	HS DECA District Competition	7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. KVCC
12/20	HS Winter Choir Concert	7 p.m. HS Auditorium
12/24 - 1/4	Winter Break	
1/14	Board of Education Meeting	7 p.m. Administration Board Room
1/16	MS 5/6 Student of the Month Breakfast	7:20 a.m. MS Library
1/17 - 1/18	Half Day for Students	HS - 10:50 a.m./MS 10:44 a.m./EL 11:55 a.m.
1/17	MS 7/8 Student of the Month Breakfast	7:20 a.m. MS Library
1/21	No School for Students	





Beadle Lake Elementary—Exciting Things Are Always Going On

By Nneka Daniels, Principal

School Year Reading Goals

The first goal for the 2018-2019 school year at Beadle Lake Elementary is to assist students in becoming the best readers they can be. Staff is working to cultivate a love of reading in all students. The theme *Reading Takes Us Places* kicked off with a Snuggle into Reading event in which students wore their pajamas, brought in blankets, and got comfortable to read until their little hearts were content. Parents and students who love to read filled the gym, and then the lights were turned down low to allow some flashlight reading. While building reading stamina, students read for 30 minutes straight. The children had a variety of books to choose from, and each student was able take a United Way-donated book home.

The second goal for this year is to increase parental involvement. We are connecting with families on many levels. After the Snuggle into Reading event, we continued Fall Harvest Night by offering a variety of indoor and outdoor activities. Students and parents worked together on arts and crafts, played tic-tac-toe with pumpkins, went on scavenger hunts, enjoyed yummy s'mores, and climbed inside a fire truck. It was a night filled with reading and family connections. Staff and students loved it!

Second grade students kicked off October by recreating their favorite pumpkin character from a literature book. Other classrooms around the school visited and asked questions about the process.

Learning Explorations

Fourth grade students from Beadle Lake Elementary went on their first three of seven Learning Explorations. Learning Explorations expand the classroom and learning beyond the walls of the school. So far, they have been to the Kalamazoo Nature Center, Agricultural Literacy Day at the Calhoun County Fairgrounds, and to the Capitol.

The visit to the Kalamazoo Nature Center included lessons on Michigan natural resources and how the Michigan landscape was formed. These lessons align and enhance the science lessons taught in the classroom. Students will then be able to make real-life connections to abstract concepts in science.

Future Farmers of America hosted a day of learning about agriculture. Presentations were made on farms, farm equipment, livestock, and the benefits of being a member of FFA. The students gathered information in their Learning Exploration journals and then shared their newly-found knowledge about farm life with their classmates.



Pumpkin Characters

Learning Exploration



Beadle Lake Readers



Fall Harvest



Harper Creek Schools Adopts New Math Resource for Elementary

By Laura Williams
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

Harper Creek elementary teachers are excited to be digging into a new elementary math resource that is rigorous, coherent, engaging, and accessible to all learners. After reviewing our assessment results and researching evidence-based math resources, Bridges was determined to be the best fit, as it will provide a great coherent learning foundation. We will continue to engage students in project-based learning activities as we navigate through the units.

<https://www.mathlearningcenter.org/bridges/grade>

Listed above is the website that has a grade overview, family engagement section, and many more resources for parents and teachers. We are eager to collaborate with our families to help our learners become better mathematical K-12 thinkers. We will be reviewing our secondary resources over the next few months and welcome parent feedback.

If you are interested in serving on a math resource review committee, please contact Kailee Fuller at 269-441-6564 to get more information.



Wattles Park Elementary Kindergarten - 1st Grade celebrated the 50th day of school by going back to the '50s.

After School at Harper Creek Middle School

By Kim Thayer, Principal

Many researchers suggest that participation in extracurricular activities increases a sense of engagement in middle school and high school students. These activities serve as a connection for students to their school. This sense of belonging helps decrease the likelihood of school failure and dropping out of high school.

Extracurricular activities also reinforce learning from the classroom by giving the students an opportunity to apply academic skills in a real-world way. A well-rounded education includes extracurricular activities.

In order to introduce students to after school activities and build interest in multiple areas of learning, Harper Creek Middle School offers many choices. These teams and groups give our middle school students opportunities to practice teamwork, endurance, how to handle competition in a positive manner, individual responsibility, and group responsibility. They help build a sense community and contribute to a well-rounded education.



Here are some of the opportunities offered:

- Cross Country
- Competitive Cheer
- Basketball
- Tennis
- Lacrosse
- Clay Target
- Student Senate
- Yearbook Club
- Beaver Idol Talent Show
- T.O.P. Club
- Homework Club
- STEAM Club
- Volleyball



- Swim & Dive Team
- Wrestling
- Track
- Equestrian Riding
- Cheer Clubs
- Competitive Robotics Team
- National Junior Honor Society
- Girls on the Run
- Learning Equality & Positivity Club
- Jazz Band Club

- Club Sports:
- Rocket Football
 - Swim Club
 - Wrestling Club



Harper Creek High School Prepares Learners for the World

By Dennis Anthony, Principal

Harper Creek High School staff have been challenging themselves to prepare learners for the world beyond our doors. There have been some recent opportunities to stretch ourselves in our understandings as we connect the world, past and present, to our classrooms.

During the first week of October, HCHS Librarian Samantha Roslund coordinated with Albion College to welcome an exhibit called *Refuge Lansing: Stories of Resettlement in Mid-Michigan*. This travelling installation was a visual display with photos and stories of individuals and families who, over the decades, chose Michigan as a place of sanctuary to escape the violence and persecution in their home countries. Our students heard a speaker talk about the history of the program, viewed a short video of a refugee teen, as well as learned how refugees get to the U.S., how many are here, what resettlement agencies do and why, and how people can help. Several classes also conducted a gallery walk with the exhibit.

Individual classrooms have extended the learning in a variety of ways. Cynthia Schofield's classroom analyzed the visual and written refugee displays to create a written representation of their story. Art teacher Deb Hall's students created life-sized models representing their interpretations of the refugee stories and the world of migration and immigration. These models were prominently displayed in the main lobby and became a visual reminder of new understandings and conversation pieces for passing students.

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Laura Williams orchestrated a trip for students and staff to meet and hear a civil rights icon at the Henry Ford Museum. On November 1, Ruby Bridges shared her story—and nearly 50 Harper Creek staff and students were there to experience it. In November of 1960, at six years old, Ruby Bridges was the first African American student to integrate an elementary school in the South, greatly challenging the civil rights understanding of the time. Her struggles led her to become a lifelong activist for racial equality and a symbol of the power of one. Our students are continuing that story in their own lives and in our school.

As November turns to December, please consider kicking off the winter and holiday season by attending student performances. Our choirs and bands, as well as our drama department, will perform in the early weeks of December. Also, don't miss out on the chance to support our annual Holiday Project and "Boot 'em to the Curb" as we fundraise to brighten the holidays for our Harper Creek families in need. Go Beavers!



Introducing the Dawn R. Vaive Memorial Scholarship Fund

By Rachel Chapin Zapf

Battle Creek Community Foundation

The Harper Creek Educational Foundation (HCEF), an affiliate of the Battle Creek Community Foundation (BCCF), is proud to announce a new scholarship benefitting the Harper Creek community. The Dawn R. Vaive Memorial Scholarship was established by Dawn's family and will be awarded for the first time in 2019.

Dawn was a graduate of Harper Creek High School, class of 1982, where she earned twelve varsity letters in swimming, volleyball, and softball. In 2009, she was inducted into the Harper Creek Athletic Hall of Fame. She earned her B.S. in Special Education from Western Michigan University, where she was Magnum Cum Laude. Dawn also received her M.S. in Reading from WMU. She taught at the former Lincoln Elementary School for five years before becoming a stay-at-home mom. In 2012 she resumed her role as an educator at Wattles Park Elementary.

Dawn had the ability to connect with her students, instilling in them a sense of confidence and motivation to overcome their adversities. She was a selfless woman who fought tirelessly for those who did not have a voice and touched the lives of countless individuals over the course of her young life.

Her greatest joy in life was being mom to Nick and Madi. Having been a cancer survivor, her fortitude and love for her children at that time was astounding. She was the pillar of strength and the shoulder to cry on for her family at all times. Dawn had a wicked sense of humor, and her beauty and grace were admirable gifts. Dawn's family would like to honor her memory by awarding scholarships to students who have overcome obstacles, are empathetic to others, celebrate their life and those in it, and strive to better the lives of those around them.

Scholarship applications are available through the Battle Creek Community Foundation website at www.bccfoundation.org. The 2019-2020 applications will open on December 1, 2018 and are due on March 1, 2019. The Battle Creek Community Foundation has over 300 scholarships available for area individuals pursuing postsecondary education. For more information, please call the BCCF Scholarship Department at 269-962-2181.

2018 Athletic Hall of Fame

Front Row: Dennis Stansbery, Laurie Smith, Adam Wilson

Back Row: Joe Yurisich, Seth Arbogast, Rocky Weaver, Nate Smith

Harper Creek Drama
Presents

December 7 & 8 @ 7 p.m. December 9 @ 2 p.m.
Harper Creek High School Auditorium

PETER AND THE STAR CATCHER

A Play By Rick Elice Music By Wayne Barker
Based on the Novel by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson

Originally produced on Broadway by Nancy Nagel Gibbs, Greg Schaffert, Eva Price, Tom Smedes, and Disney Theatrical Productions

Tickets are \$10 – General Admission

PETER AND THE STARCATCHER

Presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI)
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI (www.MTIshows.com)

Chartwells K12 Chef John Ruemenapp at Harper Creek Community Schools Named National Be-A-Star Culinary Leader of the Year

Local Chef Recognized for Outstanding Culinary Leadership and Innovation

Selected from more than 600 school districts across the United States, Chartwells K12 Chef John Ruemenapp of Harper Creek Schools has been awarded the 2018 National Be-A-Star Culinary Leader of the Year. Each year, one culinary leader is recognized nationally for their unwavering commitment to innovation and quality, along with outstanding leadership that is key in shaping the organization's culinary culture.

Chef John Ruemenapp has been a part of the Chartwells K12 team at Harper Creek Community Schools since 2015 and received this award for delivering an exceptional experience for students both inside and outside of the cafeteria. Most notably, he has introduced global flavors and new menu items, including street food and smoked meats, but his talents do not stop in the kitchen. He regularly supports other districts, champions new programs like *Student Choice*, and is the first to volunteer his time for community events.

"Providing students with great-tasting, nutritious food is another way we're working with Chartwells K12 to help all students succeed," said Rob Ridgeway, Superintendent of Harper Creek Community Schools. "Congratulations to Chef John Ruemenapp on winning the National Be-A-Star Award. It is a tremendous accomplishment and speaks to all he does to serve Harper Creek students every day."



In addition, Chef John was recognized for his important role within the community. Specifically, he helped host a career fair at Edwardsburg Middle School, where he told his story on why he became a chef. He was also featured at the annual health fair at Hillsdale Middle School.

As a National Be-A-Star winner, Chef John Ruemenapp attended the annual Compass Night of Stars event in Orlando in October. At the event, he accepted the award, which recognizes the extraordinary achievements of the organization's top performers. The highlight of the event was a gala awards banquet at Universal's Hard Rock Live, where Chef John was a featured honoree.

Be-A-Star is Compass Group's program that recognizes associates and teams for achieving business excellence. Through a comprehensive nomination and application review process, Be-A-Star selects and celebrates the very best accounts and associates from each of the Compass sectors, including Chartwells K12.





More Student Devices on the Way!

Thanks in part to the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi Indians, Firekeepers Casino, as well as the Local Revenue Sharing Board, monies received from Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) will allow Harper Creek Community Schools to increase student access to technology.

Look for new devices at all grade levels over the next two years. The three-year rollout plan is scheduled to begin at the start of second semester. Phase I includes carts of new Chromebook devices deployed in fourth and fifth grade classrooms, while ninth and tenth grade students will be issued computers for their exclusive use throughout their high school career.

Stay tuned for more details!



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
- Download the Mobile App search OK2SAY
- Visit the OK2SAY website at www.ok2say.com



Harper Creek Educational Foundation

Give • Grow • Achieve

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.

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



*500 signing bonus

www.harpercreek.net or 269.441.6567 for more details

Boot 'Em to the Curb Fundraiser Friday, December 14, 2018

Students donate \$1 a minute to kick their teacher out to the curb in front of the Harper Creek High School.

The teachers ask passing drivers for donations. For the past several years, over \$5,000 has been donated each year. The money buys coats and turkeys for approximately 30 families Harper Creek district adopts from within our own community. People are encouraged to drive by the high school on December 14 to make a donation between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. For further information, please call 249-441-8450.



Relationships: The Foundation for Maximizing Learning for All

EDUCATE EMPOWER EQUIP

#Hcignitesgreatness

By Laura Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

We are excited to be well into the start of the school year with our Harper Creek staff, students, and families! As a learning organization, we strongly value continuous improvement attained by stakeholder collaboration. Last year staff increased their knowledge about being a trauma-informed organization. We now understand that if a learner is in fight, flight, or freeze mode, their brain is temporarily unable to access the prefrontal cortex part of the brain. This part of the brain is where decision making, impulse control, and self-regulating behaviors are processed. So—instead of asking, “What is wrong with child?” we now ask, “What may have happened to this child to result in this behavior?”

Learning requires our brains to feel safe and in relationship with those around us. When we do not feel safe, our brain is not able to learn effectively. In an effort to maximize learning opportunities for all members of our community, we will continue to build strong relationships between all stakeholders and try to understand how we can support each other. Anyone in a relationship would likely agree that the best relationships take on-going reflection, commitment, and communication.

Here are the primary strategies we are working on to ensure that our learning environment is safe socially and emotionally, which has direct impact on physical safety:

- **Seek and celebrate greatness as we see it in others and ourselves**
- **Continue to implement Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Components**
- **Cognitive Coaching**
- **Embed Restorative Practices into our community culture**



A Bridge to Equity in Education

By Laura Williams,
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

As we work together to increase our cultural proficiency lens, nearly 50 Harper Creek staff members and students attended a conversation with historical figure Ruby Bridges on November 2 at Henry Ford Museum. Ruby Nell Bridges Hall (born September 8, 1954) is an American civil rights activist. She was the first African-American child to desegregate the all-white William Frantz Elementary School in Louisiana during the New Orleans school desegregation crisis in 1960. Ruby shared her story and provided opportunity for our students to ask questions about her historical experience.

Restorative Questions

To respond to challenging behavior...

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done?
 - In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

To help those harmed by others' actions...

- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

These overarching strategies work in tandem to create a sense of community and trust. Our world is very fast-paced and technology-infused, which can unintentionally promote human disconnection. Because we are committed to a common framework for building and growing relationships, we will be creating the nourishing and nurturing environment that all learners need to thrive and grow.

Let us work together to identify the strengths that we individually bring to our learning place and in our homes. Remember to lift each other up to ignite greatness all around us!

Book and Blanket Program

The Harper Creek Community Schools Book and Blanket Program is accepting contributions of blankets, blanket materials, and gently-used books.

With questions, or for additional information, contact Sharon Zebell at zebells@harpercreek.net or 269-441-6555.

Community support is always appreciated!

Distinguished Alumni and Citizen Awards

Harper Creek Community Schools has been graduating students since 1960. We invite the community to nominate outstanding Harper Creek alumni and citizens as candidates of the HC Distinguished Alumni and Citizen Awards. Award winners will be honored at the June 2019 graduation ceremony. Nominations accepted through December 31. Nomination forms and additional information may be found at:

www.harpercreek.net