

# HARPER CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOLS *Newsletter*



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

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## Message from the Superintendent



Last March I wrote about all the reasons March is one of my favorite months – the promise of spring, March Madness, and most importantly, March is Reading Month. I shared our commitment to literacy, classroom libraries, and connecting students with good books. I am happy to report we continue to have this laser-focus on reading every month, not just in March.

While I am very proud of our commitment to literacy, I am concerned by a trend that adults in America are reading less. Studies show that women are reading more than men, but the decline is seen in both genders, with television (and smart phones) contributing to the decline. Why is this concerning? Adults are the single most influential factor in cultivating a love of reading in children.

Early reading skills are essential for student success, both in and out of the classroom. Research demonstrates that children who read for pleasure perform better in the classroom than their non-pleasure reading peers. Studies confirm that strong reading skills allow children to absorb and understand new information and affect achievement in all subjects, including math and spelling.

With so much at stake, let us collectively abstain from the downward trend in reading and instead be trendsetters, reading role models. We may not be able to change the trend for the world, but we can change the trend in Harper Creek. Let's invest in our children, ourselves, and our community and read. Read for pleasure, read for knowledge. Read alone, read with your children, and let them read to you. Make books accessible, in every room of the house, in cars, in purses, backpacks and gym bags.

Moreover, the beauty of this investment, this gift, is it is affordable for all. We do not have to be rich to leave this legacy, just committed. We just need to read.

**Rob Ridgeway,  
Superintendent**



## Reading is My Superpower

By Brent Swan, Principal, Wattles Park Elementary

At Wattles Park Elementary, every day of the year is a celebration of reading, but in March we flex our superpower reading muscles. Our students have been training for Book Battles to show-off their superpower reading skills. Nothing can stop the students at Wattles Park Elementary from meeting challenges or becoming whatever they want, because of the incredible reading powers that they possess.

Our readers have the belief that nothing can stop them from saving the world, or just enjoying a good book, because they have developed superhuman skills in reading. While our students may not be leaping from tall buildings or flying at super-sonic speeds, you will see them using their reading superpowers in the classroom, in the hallway, in the cafeteria, on the bus or anywhere that a good book can be read.

You often see our highly trained superhero readers, 3rd and 4th graders, sharing their skills with our junior superhero readers, kindergarten and 1st graders. These 3rd and 4th grade reading buddies help train our younger students to do great things.



## Read, Read, Read, BLE

By Nneka Daniels, Principal, Beadle Lake Elementary

Beadle Lake Elementary Families, it's March is Reading Month. Let's challenge ourselves to read for 15 minutes every day during the month of March. Reading promotes brain development and helps deepen family bonds. Read by yourself, with a family member or read with a friend. It doesn't really matter. We just want you to read, read, read!



**In This Issue**

Message from the Superintendent . . . . 1  
 Reading is My Superpower . . . . . 1  
 Read, Read, Read, BLE . . . . . 1  
 Sonoma Elementary Readies for March is Reading Month . . . . . 2  
 Building a Reading Community . . . . . 3  
 Reading in the Middle Years . . . . . 3  
 HCHS March Newsletter . . . . . 4  
 2020 Harper Creek Schools District Calendar . . . . . 4



**Harper Creek Class of 1975  
45th Class Reunion  
August 21 & 22, 2020**  
Visit Facebook Harper Creek Class of 1975  
or email HarperCreek75@gmail.com for more information.

## Sonoma Elementary Readies for March is Reading Month

By Shalen King-Short, Principal, Sonoma Elementary

Sonoma Elementary School is ready to kick off March is Reading Month with many exciting events and activities to celebrate our unique and diverse readers!

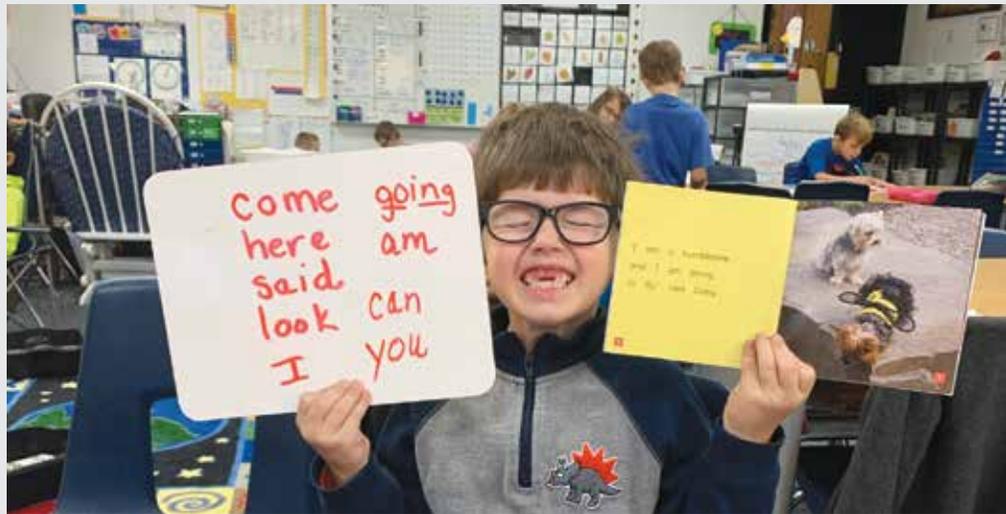
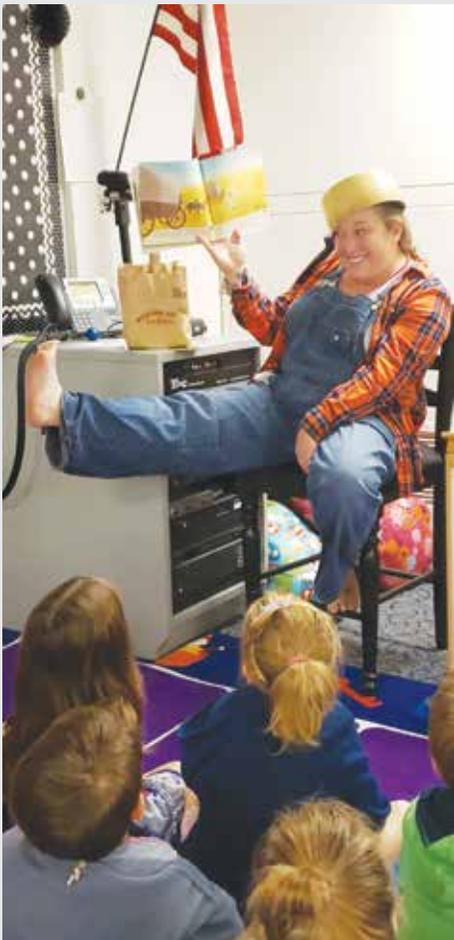
Our whole school will be reading the book, *A Boy Called Bat* by Elana K Arnold. Each classroom will have a copy and we will have activities to support understanding throughout the month.

The assembly will be on March 6th for our first through fourth graders. This exciting opportunity is tied to reading and writing. The Brainstormers team creates plays from stories that our very own Sonoma students submitted!

We will be hosting a guest reader every day in the month of March. Please check Bloomz and Facebook for opportunities to come in and read to classrooms. If you are interested please contact our office at 441-7800.

Books and Bagels is March 27th from 8:00-8:30. This Title I event is an opportunity for families to learn about the programs and strategies we are using to support students.

Mrs. Peet has scheduled a visit from Michigan author Leslie Helakoski to read and present books that she has written.



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](http://www.ok2say.com)

## In Support of Public Education COMMUNITY CONVERSATION II

March 16, 2020

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Harper Creek High School Library

Join HC Board of Education members to review and prioritize data from our initial conversation, and together determine actionable, feasible, and powerful outcomes. It promises to be another night of meaningful, open conversation.

RSVP – (269) 441-6555



## Building a Reading Community

By Laura Williams, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

This past year we have successfully added eight little libraries to areas in and around Harper Creek Community. These libraries provide free books for people that visit them. Here is where you can go to find free books in our community:

- Beadle Lake Elementary- 8175 C Drive North
- Sonoma Elementary- 4640 B Drive South
- Wattles Park Elementary- 132 Wattles Road
- Harper Creek Middle School- 7290 B Drive North
- Love Thy Neighbor Food Pantry- 1391 E Michigan Avenue
- Harper Commons- 993 Michigan Avenue East
- Ceresco Baptist Church- 230 Marshall Street
- Station 66- 4588 D Drive South



How can you help? As you go through your children's books please consider donating books in good condition that are no longer used. If you don't have children's books but you are eager to help our youth become passionate readers, then buy some books that speak to your heart and donate them. You can bring them to Harper Creek Administration Office. Our goal is to have 20 total little free to read libraries by the end of 2020. If you own a local business, please consider setting up a library in your place of business and registering it <https://littlefreelibrary.org/>. Questions call 269-441-6564.

## Third Grade Reading Law Effective 2019-2020 School Year

In 2016 the Michigan Legislature passed the "3rd Grade Reading Law" (Public Act 306). The purpose is to ensure that all students in Michigan exiting 3rd grade are at or above grade level proficiency and provide extra support for students who are not meeting benchmarks. This school year 2019-2020 this law is scheduled to go into effect. Beginning this school year, the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-Step) will be used for third graders to determine promotion to 4th grade. Students who score a year or more below grade level proficiency on the 3rd-grade state assessment will be informed in writing and further action may be necessary, including possible retention per the law. At Harper Creek, our teachers are committed to working collaboratively with our students, parents and guardians to develop passionate and proficient readers who use written language to grow and develop. If you have questions, please contact your child's school.



Reading material access right in the comfort of your own home! Did you know that you and your child have access to reading materials and resources online from the comfort of your own home?

Our state's Electronic Library of Michigan provides a wide variety of resources for educators and families that want more access to reading materials. To learn more, please visit <https://www.mel.org/kids> to discover the many free resources for your family!

This website also provides a link to your local library – Willard Library.



## Reading in the Middle Years

By Kim Thayer, Middle School Principal

Where have all the readers gone? This is a title in a newly published Educational Leadership magazine. The article reports that a study of 12th grade students showed that reading books is at an all-time low:

Harper Creek Middle School staff are working to keep the infectious love of reading, evident in elementary grades, going during the middle years. In fact, eight curious staff members, representing all four core areas, recently attended a reading conference that focused on reading fluency and assessment. As adult learners, we explored different ways to help our students become better readers and how to improve our use assessments to guide instruction. As a staff, we strive to continue to develop reading skills and to prepare students for the rigor of high school and post high school learning.

### School Strategies:

- Focus on Vocabulary Instruction
- Reading Across Curriculum
- Internal Fluency Practice
- Listening to Fluent Readings
- Independent Reading of Student Choice
- Increased use of Picture Books
- Increase Diverse Books

Year	Percent of Students that Read on a Daily Basis
2016	16%
1976	60%

Source: Twenge, J., Martin, G., & Spitzberg, B. (2018). Trends in adolescents' media use, 1976-2016: the rise of digital media, the decline of TV, and the (near) demise of print.

### Parents as Partners: What you can do at home

- Talk to Your Child – A LOT – vocabulary is a key to being a good reader!
- Read to Your Child
- Have Your Child Read to You
- Have Your Child Read Throughout the House (recipes, instructions, etc.)
- Tell Stories, Have Your Child Tell You Stories
- Ask Your Child Questions About What They Are Reading
- Let Them See You Read – Make Reading a Family Priority

Hopefully, college professors like Penny Kittle will see a change when they survey students about reading. Her most recent survey of her freshman classes showed that half of the students state they never read books. By working together, maybe we can reverse this trend.



# Thank You!

Thank you to the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi and Firekeepers Casino Hotel for your continued support to Harper Creek Community Schools.

Save the Date!

### Community Connections Luncheon

Formerly Senior Citizen's Luncheon

May 20, 2020

11:30am

HC Administration Building Board Room

RSVP

Zebells@harpercreek.net

(269) 441-6555





## HCHS March Newsletter

By Dennis Anthony, High School Principal

March is Reading Month! Integrating and encouraging reading as a life-long skill and activity is a year-long commitment at Harper Creek High School. The emphasis on reading in March is a good time to consider ways to promote, engage and learn through reading.

The last few school years have seen efforts for a more culturally comprehensive curriculum with regards to equitable perspectives and 2020 has started to emerge as a year for reading outside of our comfort zone. HCHS Librarian Samantha Roslund explains that, for many, that means choosing books that are about characters or written by authors who don't look like us and have had different experiences and perspectives. Ms. Roslund points out there have been a number of social media campaigns and hashtags springing up around this concept; check out #needdiversebooks, #diversebooks, and #ownvoices to find out more.

Now is a great time for your teenage student to start reading outside of her/his box. Ms. Roslund has been instrumental in purchasing titles that revolve around equity and diverse experiences. Choosing books that are written with, and portray characters with, under-encountered perspectives can be enriching in new ways. Plots and themes that encourage personal understanding help equip students for a world beyond our doors. With these titles available, the library continues to be an inclusive space for all students in our building.

Ms. Roslund further reminds us that encountering unfamiliar stories and new experiences through reading is one of the most effective ways to foster empathy and compassion, especially in a young learner. Japanese writer Haruki Murakami is often quoted as saying, "If you only read the books that everyone else is reading, you can only think what everyone else is thinking." Or, more simply, if you only read the books you usually read, you can only think the way you've always thought.

I've said it before, "Reading can be contagious at any age!" Even at the high school level, consider engaging with your student about what you are reading *and* what they are reading. Read aloud an interesting news article, story, or book excerpt, and ask your student their thoughts. Encourage students to share with you a part (or all!) of what they are reading. Read aloud things you see in all media forms (tv, print, on-line) to spark the conversation and build a life-long love of reading.

Wherever you and your student lay on the reading journey, please join us in encouraging all to read more, especially "outside the box," and push understandings past what we already know.

## • 2020 HARPER CREEK SCHOOLS DISTRICT CALENDAR •

MS MSBOA Festival	High School	3/5/2020	
MS MSBOA Festival	High School	3/6/2020	
WP Spring Pictures	WPE	3/6/2020	8:00 AM
WP PTC Meeting	WPE	3/9/2020	5:30 PM
Board of Education Meeting	Administration	3/9/2020	7:00 PM
BL Conferences	BLE	3/10/2020	3:45 PM
MS 5/6 Student of the Month Breakfast	MS Library	3/11/2020	7:15 AM
MS 7/8 Student of the Month Breakfast	MS Library	3/12/2020	7:15 AM
SO-Parent Teacher Conferences	SON	3/12/2020	4:00 PM
No School - Students		3/13/2020	
Community Conversation Workshop	HS Library	3/16/2020	5:30 PM
BL Conferences	BLE	3/18/2020	3:45 PM
SO-Parent Teacher Conferences	SON	3/19/2020	4:00 PM
Countdown to Kindergarten	All Elementaries	3/25/2020	6:00 PM
HS - Spring Musical	HS Auditorium	3/27/2020	7:00 PM
HS - Spring Musical	HS Auditorium	3/28/2020	7:00 PM
HS - Spring Musical	HS Auditorium	3/29/2020	2:00 PM
MS 5/6 Student of the Month Breakfast	MS Library	4/1/2020	7:15 AM
WP Spring Sing	Wattles Park Elementary Gym	4/2/2020	
MS 7/8 Student of the Month Breakfast	MS Library	4/2/2020	7:15 AM
No School Students and Staff		4/3/2020	
HS - Spring Musical	HS Auditorium	3/28/2020	7:00 PM
HS - Spring Musical	HS Auditorium	3/29/2020	2:00 PM
MS 5/6 Student of the Month Breakfast	MS Library	4/1/2020	7:15 AM
WP Spring Sing	WPE Gym	4/2/2020	
MS 7/8 Student of the Month Breakfast	MS Library	4/2/2020	7:15 AM
No School Students and Staff		4/3/2020	
Spring Break		4/6/2020	
Board of Education Meeting	Administration	4/13/2020	7:00 PM
WP PTC Meeting	WPE	4/13/2020	5:30 PM
HS - 11th grade SAT testing; PSAT 9th & 10th; Senior Service Day; HS - 11th grade SAT testing; PSAT 9th & 10th; Senior Service Day			
HS - 11th Grade ACT Workkeys		4/15/2020	
HS - 11th Grade MSTEP Online Testing		4/17/2020	
HS Blood Drive	HS Auditorium	4/17/2020	7:30 AM
Countdown to Kindergarten	All Elementaries	4/21/2020	6:00 PM
DECA International Competition		4/27/2020	
HS - Senior GPA Deadline		5/1/2020	
WP Grandparent Ice Cream Social & Book Fair	WPE	5/4/2020	6:00 PM
WP APTT Conferences K-2	WPE	5/5/2020	5:30 PM
MS 5/6 Student of the Month Breakfast	MS Library	5/6/2020	7:15 AM
WP APTT Conferences 3-4	WPE	5/7/2020	5:30 PM
MS 7/8 Student of the Month Breakfast	MS Library	5/7/2020	7:15 AM
HS - Prom		5/9/2020	6:00 PM
Board of Education Meeting	Administration	5/11/2020	8:00 PM
WP PTC Meeting	WPE	5/11/2020	5:30 PM
MS Band Concert 5th grade		5/12/2020	7:00 PM
HS - Senior Exams - 4th & 5th Block		5/13/2020	
HS - Senior Exams - 1st & 2nd Block	Seniors excused after 2nd block	5/14/2020	
MS Choir Concert 5-8th grades		5/14/2020	7:00 PM
HS - Senior Awards Breakfast	HS Cafeteria	5/15/2020	7:30 AM
HS - Senior Awards HS Auditorium		5/15/2020	8:00 AM
HS - Senior Walk		5/15/2020	10:00 AM
HS - Senior Video	HS Auditorium	5/15/2020	10:30 AM
HS Spring Band Concert	HS Auditorium	5/18/2020	7:00 PM
MS Band Concert 6-8th grades		5/19/2020	7:00 PM
Community Connections Luncheon Administration		5/20/2020	11:30 AM
HS Spring Choir Concert	HS Auditorium	5/21/2020	7:00 PM
No School Students and Staff		5/25/2020	
8th grade award ceremony	MS Auditorium	5/27/2020	10:00 AM
HS - Senior Lunch & Graduation Practice	Harper Creek Stadium	5/27/2020	12:00 PM
7th Grade Award ceremony	MS Auditorium	5/27/2020	1:00 PM
6th Grade Award ceremony	MS Auditorium	5/28/2020	10:00 AM
5th Grade Award ceremony	MS Auditorium	5/28/2020	1:00 PM
HS - Graduation/Commencement		5/29/2020	6:00 PM
Half Day for Students		6/1/2020	
HS - 1/2 Day - 1st & 2nd Hour Exams		6/1/2020	7:45 AM
Last Day of School - Half Day		6/2/2020	
HS - 1/2 Day - 4th & 5th Hour Exams		6/2/2020	7:45 AM

Please refer to our district calendar at [www.harpercreek.net](http://www.harpercreek.net) for more events and information.



### Harper Creek Educational Foundation

Give • Grow • Achieve

[www.bccfoundation.org/fund/hcsef](http://www.bccfoundation.org/fund/hcsef)

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](http://www.harpercreek.net) or 269.441.6567 for more details

## HARPER CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COUNTDOWN TO KINDERGARTEN

Countdown to Kindergarten is a one hour monthly evening program for children who will be attending kindergarten in the fall of 2020 and their parents or guardians.

The enrollment process will be discussed at these meetings.

Children must be 5 years old on or before September 1, 2020 to attend kindergarten in the fall.



March 25 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

April 21 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

May 21 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

For more information please call one of our schools:

Beadle Lake Elementary

Wattles Park Elementary

Sonoma Elementary

441-3250

441-5850

441-7800