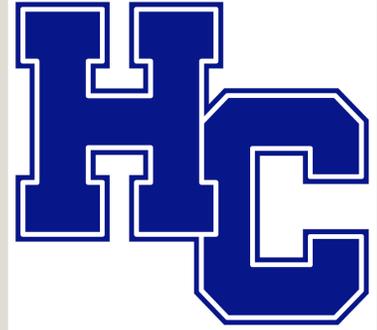


Superintendent Communication

July 27, 2020 ↔ BACK TO SCHOOL EDITION

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HCCS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (& ANSWERS) REGARDING BACK TO SCHOOL

We have not wavered in our mission and focus on students. The safety of our students, families and staff always comes first. Not what is easiest, not what is popular, always what is best. We know there are many things to consider—student and teacher relationships, the need for parents/guardians to work outside the home, state and local guidelines and recommendations. We are working to keep up with the sometimes daily changes and will update this document accordingly. Below are some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and the District's responses. I hope you find the answers helpful. Please contact my office if we can be of assistance.

What delivery of instruction models will HCCS offer to students and parents in 2020-21 if Harper Creek remains in Phase 4 of the Governor's re-opening plan?

♦ **5-day week in-school, face-to-face traditional instruction model for K—4 students**

For those who would like their child to attend school 5-days/week.

♦ **HCCS Face-to-Face/Online Instruction Model for middle & high school (MS/HS) students**

MS/HS students will be in classrooms with teachers two days a week and learning online three days per week. Courses will use HC curriculum and be HC teacher-led and/or face-to-face courses in HCCS classrooms.

♦ **HCCS Virtual Instruction Model**

All instruction will be completed remotely. It is our goal and we are actively working to have an HCCS teacher provide this instruction with Google Classroom for students in grades 3—12, Seesaw for students in grades K—2, and supplemented with Schoology at some times. Depending on the demand and HCCS teacher interest, HCCS will use HCCS-trained teaching staff members with a proven and successful virtual learning program to provide the instruction for the HCCS Virtual Instruction Model. The blend of HCCS teachers and Michigan Virtual courses will be used if we are not able to provide an HCCS teacher course or elementary grade level.

**The delivery system has not been finalized and the District is considering an increase in the days per week of face-to-face instruction for 5th—12th grade students.*

IMPORTANT NOTE: SEMESTER-LONG COMMITMENT

- ♦ **Whether your family chooses traditional 5-days/week face-to-face instruction for elementary students, the Face-to-Face/Online Instruction Model for high school and middle school students, or the Virtual Instruction Model, the delivery of instruction**

Are schools required by the Michigan Dept. of Education to provide 180 days/1,098 hours of instruction as past years?

- ◆ Yes—at this time there has been no change to the days/minutes requirement.
- ◆ HCCS Virtual Academy students will be required to meet these requirements days/minutes of instruction as well.

What about students with Special Needs and students with IEP's?

- ◆ We will work closely with families of special needs students using their IEP team to determine the procedures and needs on an individual student-by-student basis.

FAQ REGARDING IN-SCHOOL, FACE-TO-FACE INSTRUCTION**If we have to transition from in-school, face-to-face instruction to remote learning, will it be different than last spring?**

- ◆ Yes. HCCS teaching staff will create and deliver courses and content in a more robust, organized and user-friendly format. We have provided initial staff professional development with follow-up help sessions to assist staff with the goal of having several weeks of lessons prepared for in-school and remote learning.
- ◆ The requirements for virtual learning participation, rigor and grading will be the same as in-school learning. At this time, MDE attendance and reporting requirements remain as rigorous as in-school.

How will children and staff keep up with instruction if quarantined for a number of days?

- ◆ It is the District's plan to continue to provide instruction remotely if a teacher, student, classroom is quarantined but feeling well enough to participate. Each individual situation will require its own set of conditions.

Will students and staff who have a fever of 100.4 or higher be restricted from school activities?

- ◆ Yes. Students/Staff will be required to be symptom-free with their temperature below 100.4 for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before returning to school activities (per CDC guidance dated 07/20/2020).

What will social distancing in classrooms look like?

- ◆ Smaller class sizes (due to some families choosing Virtual Instruction Model or the Face-to-Face/Online Instruction Model).
- ◆ Non-essential classroom furniture will be moved out of classrooms.
- ◆ Grades K—4 students will be required to wear masks when outside their self-contained classrooms—in hallways, common areas, on buses, and where social distance cannot be maintained.
- ◆ Grade 5 -12 students will be required to wear a face mask.
- ◆ All staff members will be required to wear a face mask.
- ◆ To the best of our ability, student seating will be assigned, facing one direction and spaced as far apart as room dimension and furnishings/seating allows.

How will social distancing be accomplished in hallways, passing times, bathrooms, etc.

- ◆ Students will be sent directly to their classrooms when school entrances are opened at a set time determined by their school.
- ◆ Passing time in the secondary buildings will be staggered, time shortened to avoid congestion in the hallways. Students will be limited to going to their lockers before school, lunchtime and after school. Students will be released in the afternoon by classroom and must exit the building within minutes (# of minutes yet to be determined).
- ◆ Bathrooms will post a capacity limit to assist in social distancing.
- ◆ Elementary buildings will enter school and go directly to classrooms.
- ◆ Elementary transitioning will be limited, however, when necessary, students will be supervised by staff members.
- ◆ 'Specials' Classes and Auxiliary Teachers/Staff will go to the students' classrooms.

Will elementary students participate in recess?

- ◆ Yes. Students will participate in recess with their self-contained classrooms.

What will PE, Athletics, Band and Choir look like this school year?

- ◆ We expect PE, Band and Choir classes will meet outside as much as possible.
- ◆ There is a high likelihood that locker rooms will not be available.
- ◆ Music theory instruction can be delivered inside. The delivery of instruction to students whose instruments can be played with a face covering, can be held inside (for instance string instruments). However, vocal music and instruments that cannot be played with a face covering will most likely be practiced/performed outside.
- ◆ At this time, MHSAA plans to proceed with fall athletics. In the next few weeks, Harper Creek Community Schools will make its decision on athletic participation and protocols.

What is the procedure/length of quarantine if a student/staff member tests positive for COVID-19?

- ◆ A teacher or staff member that tests positive for COVID-19 should isolate at home.
- ◆ The teacher or staff person may return to school after the Local Health Department releases them from isolation (depending on where the case lives will determine which local health department will release them) and 24 hours with no fever and other symptoms have improved and 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared (*may be up to 20 days with more severe illness for those who are severely immunocompromised).

Note: a healthcare provider may require a longer time period. The District will review each individual case and communicate with the student/staff member.

What is the procedure if a student/staff member shows signs of being sick while at school? The student/staff member ...

- ◆ Will be moved to an isolation room and sent home as soon as possible.
- ◆ Will be encouraged to contact a healthcare provider.
- ◆ Cannot return to school until quarantine and fever free period, determined by CDC and local health officials, has been completed.

How will disinfecting and sanitization be adjusted for COVID?

- ◆ The District has purchased electrostatic sprayers that can sanitize and eliminate the COVID particles within seconds.
- ◆ Hand sanitization stations are located in every classroom. Students will receive training with best sanitizing practice. Hand sanitization will occur on a schedule.
- ◆ Cleaning desks will occur hourly at the secondary level and at least every four hours at the elementary level.
- ◆ Water fountains will be shut off.
- ◆ We encourage students to bring water from home.
- ◆ All buses will be sanitized after every bus run.

How will health screens occur?

- ◆ Employees will provide daily health screenings at home prior to leaving for school.
- ◆ All parents will be requested to perform health screenings daily on their child(ren).
- ◆ When arriving at a HCCS school or facility, visitors will be subject to temperature and health screenings prior to entering the building.
- ◆ Staggered release and entrance times will be used as much as possible to reduce congregating.

Will K-4 students be required to wear masks in the classroom?

- ◆ The Governor's Executive Order does not require students in elementary classrooms to wear face masks unless they come in contact with other classes for an extended period of time (10 minutes).

Will HCCS provide face coverings?

- ◆ HCCS has purchased disposable face covering for students and staff members. Students/staff may also provide their own face coverings if desired (inappropriate messaging/images not permitted).

Can students/staff refuse to wear a face covering and/or have a medical exemption?

- ◆ When students/staff are in school, participating in face-to-face instruction, compliance with the Governor's Executive Order regarding face coverings is required.
- ◆ A medical exemption for a student will be determined through a formal IEP or 504 process.
- ◆ Staff medical exemption will be reviewed by the HCCS Human Resources Department.

Will teachers be able to be heard clearly by students when wearing a face covering?

- ◆ HCCS K-8 classrooms have sound systems. Sound systems for the high school are in the planning stage. Sound system use will be required and will allow staff to speak at a lower volume and be heard clearly.

When can students and staff have a break from wearing a face covering?

- ◆ HCCS is encouraging teachers to periodically teach their classes outside with social distancing.

How will students be served breakfast & lunch during Phase 4?

- ◆ All elementary students will receive their breakfast and lunch in the classroom.
- ◆ HCCS will be purchasing equipment to provide breakfast and lunch more efficiently in the classroom as well as an electronic purchase platform.
- ◆ Middle and High School students will most likely receive meals in a grab & go style.
- ◆ HCCS is in the process of determining how to provide meals to students in the Virtual Instructional Model, and to students on their online days in the Face-to-Face/Online Instructional Model.

Will visitors be allowed at school?

- ◆ HCCS will not allow visitors at schools. Parents who wish to come to our school offices will be required to take a symptom screening, temperature check, and hand sanitization upon arrival.

Will before and after school care be available for the 2020-21 school year?

- ◆ HCCS plans to offer Before and After Care at all elementary buildings.
- ◆ HCCS is in the process of determining the viability of a daycare option at the Middle School.

Will student clubs and other after-school activities be allowed?

- ◆ HCCS will allow after-school clubs and student activities to occur during Phase 4 in person.
- ◆ Clubs may meet virtually.

What will transportation look like this school year?

- ◆ HCCS is encouraging all **parents to strongly consider** providing their **own means** of transportation.
- ◆ All bus drivers and students will be required to wear face masks at all times on the bus.
- ◆ All windows on the bus will remain open or partially open on the buses at all times.
- ◆ All students from the same family will ride in the same bus seat. (Up to 2-3 students per seat)
- ◆ All other students will be assigned a seat with one student per seat being the goal if possible.

Will HCCS be using signage and reminders to reinforce procedures?

- ◆ HCCS has purchased signage/markings to assist students/staff with safety protocol messaging and reminders.
- ◆ Daily safety messages will be delivered to students and staff.

What will occur if we are moved to Stage 3 before school starts?

- ◆ HCCS has purchased additional devices so that all students will have devices.
- ◆ Teachers will be using online platform so they can adjust to distance learning seamlessly.
- ◆ HCCS has been preparing procedures for technology hand-out and teachers using our new Learning Management System to provide a more robust, rigorous remote-learning model should the Governor return us to Stage 3.

HCCS VIRTUAL INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

What is the link to register my child for the HCCS Virtual Academy?

- ◆ <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScqEOHXMVlpqSxDcHLTLgzhKumnObznqfKEFlpB-HMWUTqLvg/viewform>

Is there a deadline to enroll in the HCCS Virtual Instructional Model or Face-to-Face/Online Instructional Model?

- ◆ Yes. HCCS asks that you register for one of the two programs by August 3, 2020.

When does my HCCS Virtual Instructional Model become final?

- ◆ August 14th. We are closing registration and considering all registrations final. At that point, we have to make staffing decisions that cannot be changed until the semester ends. There is no guarantee that after this staffing process there will be any room to move between instructional models. We will allow switching between models at semester break.

Will grades be issued in the HCCS Virtual Instructional Model?

- ◆ Yes. Grades will be issued just as they are in the 5-day Face-to-Face/Online Instructional Model.
- ◆

If we enroll in the HCCS Virtual Instructional Model, when can we transition back to Face-to-Face/Online Instructional Model?

- ◆ Enrolling in the HCCS Virtual Instructional Model will require a semester-long commitment. This commitment is needed to provide a proper sequence for students to successfully transition as well as allows HCCS to provide appropriate staffing levels for Face-to-Face/Online Instructional Model in the first semester as well as second semester.
- ◆ Extreme circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Will the online course list offered by the Virtual Instructional Model match with current HCCS courses?

- ◆ HCCS courses taught by HCCS teachers will follow the HCCS curriculum. Michigan Virtual courses also offer many courses we do not offer in our traditional classrooms, so options may be available!

Can students still attend the Battle Creek Math & Science Center (BCMCS), Calhoun Area Career Center, (CACC) and Dual Enrollment Classes as a HCCS Virtual Instructional Model student?

- ◆ Yes, following the same process and requirements in place for the MS/HS Face-to-Face/Online Instructional Model.
- ◆ The specifics for the BCMSC and CACC are determined by each outside organization.

Will there be meaningful progress assessments and testing?

- ◆ In all online courses, there will be meaningful assessments, quizzes, tests and exams. Depending on the course structure, some assessments will receive immediate feedback, while other assessments that need the teacher to grade it will receive feedback in a timely manner.

How will HCCS Virtual Instructional Model students do their standardized testing (PSAT) in the fall and spring?

- ◆ Presently, these state/national tests are required to be taken in the school setting.

HCCS VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION MODEL QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

◆ Why are spaces limited? If there is a greater need/demand than spots in the Virtual Instruction Model how are those spaces allocated?

- ◆ Our initial registration gives us the ability to determine staffing for the HCCS Virtual Instructional Model, and Face-to-Face/ Online Instructional Model, which is somewhat flexible at this time. However, once we have determined the staffing needs for each, the ability to add students to any instructional model is limited. Once staffing is set, enrollment will be based on available seats.

How often will face-to-face virtual meetings occur between students and teachers? Will that be outside of the daily class time or in addition?

- ◆ There will be daily contact between the teacher and students. Students who need additional help will be able to schedule time with the teacher each week. When this will occur will be determined by the teacher and students.

If a student chooses HCCS Virtual Instructional Model now, but schools never reopen for face-to-face in the fall, do the students automatically join their previously assigned teachers?

- ◆ Students will remain in the classes in which they were enrolled and teachers with whom they were assigned.

If we start the school year with HCCS Virtual Instructional Model, but then the District's Face-to-Face/Online Instructional Model shuts down, can students switch to and be with student's previously assigned classroom teachers?

- ◆ No. There will be at least a semester commitment to the HCCS Virtual Instructional Model. Staffing, pupil accounting and other factors do not permit us to be as fluid as families may desire but we will work hard to meet the needs of our students and families.

Can HCCS Virtual Instructional Model students participate in extracurricular activities and sports?

- ◆ Yes. HCCS Virtual Instructional Model students remain enrolled in their home school and have chosen to receive instruction virtually, as long as they are enrolled full time.

If my child participates in the HCCS Virtual Instructional Model, will he/she/they be considered an HCCS-enrolled student in their present school, including as a Schools of Choice student?

- ◆ Yes. Enrolling in the HCCS Virtual Instructional Model is simply choosing a delivery of instruction method. Your child will remain actively enrolled in their present school. All records, conferences and contacts remain with your currently-enrolled school.

MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

Will Open Houses and Parent/Teacher Conferences be held?

- ◆ We expect Open Houses and Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held virtually while we remain in Stage 4.
- ◆ Appointments will be available to tour buildings prior to school. Teachers will not be present during student tours.

What will occur if we are moved to Stage 3 before school starts?

- ◆ HCCS has been preparing procedures for technology hand-out and teachers using our new Learning Management System to provide a more robust, rigorous remote-learning model should the Governor return us to Stage 3

HCCS STUDENT/STAFF WELLBEING

What is HCCS doing to ensure the social emotional wellbeing of students this fall?

- ◆ HCCS is committed to creating supportive and responsive learning climates to ensure our students can thrive. We will be paying close attention to the social emotional needs of our students and intentionally setting up environments that foster belonging and community as well as emotional safety and support. Social Emotional Learning skills will be integrated into teaching practices. To supplement our internal counseling services and support, we will continue to enhance our community partnerships so we can provide mental health support to students. In addition, we will regularly share resources and tools for our students and families. Understanding the individual dynamics and needs of our students and their families, it is essential that we keep open lines of communication between school and home as we work together to support our students.

What is HCCS doing to ensure the social emotional wellbeing of staff as they return to school?

- ◆ The social emotional wellbeing of our staff and students is at the forefront of our planning. We will provide resources for our staff including self care, resilience, and wellbeing strategies and supports. All staff also have access to HelpNet at any time.

We cannot control the stress of all our unknowns. However, we can control our hope and positivity. Let us remember that Harper Creek Community Schools is dedicated to being the *Cornerstone of the Community*. There may be differences in opinion. People may be frustrated with the unknowns of the upcoming school year, and life in the age of the pandemic. But we are a community and work best when we partner with one another openly, honestly, and respectfully.

We continue to build our Covid-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. On August 10, 2020 our Board of Education will approve the Harper Creek Community Schools formal return to school plan, which must be submitted to the Michigan Department of Education by August 15, 2020.

We are working diligently to get you the information you need to make informed, educated decisions for your children. School building offices are reopening and will share information on new processes and procedures in the coming weeks and my office will continue to keep the lines of communication as open as possible. Although it may look different, together we can make the 2020-21 school year meaningful and valuable for all students and families.

— Robert Ridgeway, Superintendent

EDUCATE

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Students for Life