

HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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School Annual Education Report (AER)

Honey Creek Community School

September 1, 2010

Dear Parents and Community Members:

We are pleased to present you with the Annual Education Report (AER) which provides key information on the 2009-2010 educational progress for Honey Creek Community School. The AER addresses the complex reporting information required by federal and state laws. The school's report contains information about student assessment, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and teacher quality. If you have any questions about the AER, please contact Al Waters, Executive Director for assistance.

The AER is available for you to review electronically by visiting the following web site <http://honeycreekschool.org>. You may review a copy from the main office at your child's school.

For 2009-2010, Honey Creek Community School made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English language arts and mathematics. While we are pleased to have reached this important goal, we are continuously working to improve. We appreciate the continued support of parents, staff and our community in this effort.

The School

Honey Creek was started by parents who were interested in finding quality alternative education for their children. In 1995, a charter was granted through Washtenaw Intermediate School District, and Honey Creek opened its doors for its first school year.

Honey Creek Community School is a public charter school designed to guide the students in a multi-age setting emphasizing social skills, technology, literacy, and environmental studies. Honey Creek is housed at the High Point Center, located on 40 acres with nature trails, where we share a playground, indoor heated pool, interact with High Point students and learn appreciation for those who are different from ourselves. Our students are residents of Washtenaw County's ten school districts and thus supported with state and county funds and federal grants. Our charter was renewed in May 2009 for another five years.

Honey Creek Community School houses grades K-8. The middle school, grades 6-8, was implemented in 2001, beginning with only 6th and 7th grades that first year. 189 students were enrolled at Honey Creek in 2008-2009. Early Elementary had a 18:1 student per teacher ratio. Middle Elementary had a 16:1 student per teacher ratio, and Later Elementary had an 20:1 student per teacher ratio. The Middle School had a ratio of 19 students per teacher.

Honey Creek Community School's overarching philosophy rests on the assumption that people learn and grow best when the various aspects of their education and experience are integrated and interactive. To that end, Honey Creek Community School bases learning on an integrated curriculum and on combining thinking with doing. In addition, Honey Creek Community School fosters connections among the home, the school, the community, and among children and adults of different ages and backgrounds. The curriculum emphasizes the integration of thought and experience, and the integration of subject areas, by centering learning on themes and projects with meaning and purpose in the students' lives. A model of apprenticeship best characterizes the nature of the learning experience, in which adults with various kinds of expertise, including teachers, parents, and other community members, share in the teaching of the children, and the children's lives inside the school and outside the school are connected by those relationships and by visits to community sites which are important to the projects and themes the students are doing and studying. Within the school, those projects and themes are explored through learning centers, workstations, and through the Academic Service- Learning program, which allow teachers to guide students as they learn through hands-on activities, both individually and in groups.

Registration and Enrollment

The enrollment process at Honey Creek involves several steps. In the winter, interested parents must attend an enrollment information meeting. In February, enrollment applications for new students will be accepted. Students will be admitted by a lottery system to fill the open spots. Those who do not receive a spot for the following school year will be placed on a waiting list. After receiving a spot, the student and parent make a partial day visit to Honey Creek to experience our normal school setting. After making this visit, families may confirm their spot with Honey Creek for the following school year. Students who are currently enrolled in Honey Creek and their siblings will be offered the opportunity in January to reenroll for the next year. Those spots, which remain after re-enrollment, will be offered to community members.

School Improvement

For the past two years, Honey Creek Community School's school improvement efforts have been largely focused on reducing the number of students identified as not proficient in language arts and math as determined by statewide assessments. Our stated goal is to have 100 percent of students performing at or above the proficiency level by the 2013-14 school year as mandated by federal law. With our present proficiency rates averaging 96.4 percent, the school has begun efforts to increase the number of students scoring in the advanced range in 2009-10, 52 percent of Honey Creek students scored in the advanced range on statewide assessments. While HCCS continues to address the individual needs of those not yet proficient in both in the general ed classroom and through Title 1 Targeted services, additional efforts are in place to support greater student achievement by all students. These efforts include:

1. Adding two more teachers to our Instructional Consultant Team and supporting those teachers through the professional development process. The function of the Instructional Consultant Team is identifying an instructional match for struggling learners, thereby creating a pathway for academic success.
2. Training all k -3 teachers in Michigan Literacy Progress Profile which further prepares teachers to utilize reading readiness kits,

diagnostic instruments for assessing reading readiness, and reading progress portfolios.

3. Train a 4/5 teacher and a middle school teacher in utilizing differentiated strategies in instruction of reading and writing. These strategies further augment the instructor's ability to meet the student at his or her instructional level and accelerate the learning process.
4. Trained entire faculty in planning and implementing differentiated instructional practices. Differentiated approach was linked to curriculum mapping process to provide for meeting the unique needs in each student.
5. Middle school science teacher attended National Science Conference with workshops targeting differentiated, and project-based strategies for the instruction of science.
6. Four teachers attended workshops targeting differentiated math instruction, approaches to teaching struggling students, and integrating projects into the math curriculum.

Continued efforts will include:

1. Providing a member of each grade level team with training on implementing the new Core Content Curriculum which the state has adopted and will implement this school year. The team member will be responsible for sharing that information with the remainder of his or her instructional team. The new content standards are more rigorous than Michigan's present curriculum framework.
2. Identify materials and professional development opportunities that augment the overall quality of instruction and promote greater levels of student achievement.
3. Identifying and implementing a reliable nationally normed test to measure student achievement in the four major subject areas. This assessment will be used to balance state scores and provide a balance picture of actual student achievement.

4. Design and implement a new teacher evaluation process, which incorporates student achievement as a major factor in the evaluation as required by state law.

Curriculum

Honey Creek Community School's curriculum is based on the Michigan's Curriculum Framework and designed to meet each of the Grade Level Content Equivalencies through a multi-year approach. The school's teacher created curriculum is integrated across subject areas, thematically structured, and project based.

The school's multi-age classrooms integrate grade levels as follows: Early Elementary, Grades K and 1; Middle Elementary, Grades 2 and 3, Later Elementary, Grades 4 and 5; Middle School, Grades 6,7, and 8.

Combining grade levels provides the possibility of greater differentiation within the curriculum and a unique opportunity to meet individual learning needs. Honey Creek believes that this approach fosters greater academic achievement while providing student the benefit of serving as both the mentor and the mentee depending upon individual skill levels.

The faculty of Honey Creek has developed exceptional skill in interpreting and applying the grade level competencies articulated in the Michigan curriculum framework. In an effort to make curriculum meaningful, accessible, and engaging, Honey Creek faculty design lessons and projects that foster in depth understanding and promote critical thinking among our students. We believe that this approach far out-values rote learning, and that the ability to engage in critical thought will better serve our students through their educational, life, and work experiences.

For specific information regarding the Honey Creek Curriculum, please contact your child's teacher.

Curriculum Celebration

Selecting appropriate assessment tools for any educational program requires aligning the assessment methods with the developmental age of the students, the content of the curriculum, and the understanding of learning that is embodied in the school. This final element, all too often overlooked in the rush to “pick a test and get on with it,” is essential if we are to provide a full picture of how as well as what our children learn.

Honey Creek has elected to measure our students’ learning and to demonstrate that learning to the community through a unique semi-annual Curriculum Celebration at each level. The Celebration embodies all forms of alternative assessment, including performance assessment, product assessment, portfolios of student work, student exhibition and personal communication. Every student in every classroom participates after the completion of a unit; therefore they tell the story of what and how they have been learning in our school. Visitors to the Celebration see student-made products, watch demonstrations, hear students describe their work, ask questions, and – as they walk through a series of rooms filled with bright displays and chattering children – gain an understanding of both Honey Creek’s curriculum and our philosophy.

Performance Series

Honey Creek Community School student participate in Scantron’s Performance Series Assessment In September and May of each school year. The tables below compare the average class scaled scores for the last two school years with Scantron’s grade level range. At all grade levels, Honey Creek students scored in the top of the range or exceeded the range.

Performance Series Data
Math
2008 & 2009

Grade Level	Scantron Anticipated Scaled Score Range	2008 Class Average Scaled Score	2009 Class Average Scaled Score
3	2181-2332	2412	2390
4	2333-2461	2389	2487
5	2462-2569	2660	2547
6	2570-2656	2755	2717
7	2657-2720	2656	2864
8	2751-2763	2730	2796

Performance Series Data
Reading
2008 & 2009

Grade Level	Scantron Anticipated Scaled Score Range	2008 Class Average Scaled Score	2009 Class Average Scaled Score
3	2191-2385	2597	2632
4	2386-2550	2653	2727
5	2551-2683	2960	2814
6	2684-2787	2992	3025
7	2788-2859	3097	3087
8	2860-2902	3082	3141

Parent Conferences

Honey Creek Community School holds formal student led, parent-teacher conferences twice per year, although parents are encouraged to meet with their child's teacher at any time there is a concern. Anecdotal evidence suggests that 96 percent of parents participate in the conferences; however, Honey Creek has formally tracked participation in the past. In an effort to comply with Michigan Department of Education regulations, HCCS will begin tracking parent participation during the 2010-2011 school year.

Summary

As can be seen in the above paragraphs, as well as the attached data tables, students at Honey Creek Community School exceed the State's academic performance expectations in all areas; however, simply judging a student or a school based on a set of test scores provides a narrow perspective on both. At HCCS, we believe it is our culture, which is built around providing a safe and nurturing environment for students and families, that sets us apart from other schools. Our small class sizes and strong student teacher relationships foster greater growth both socially and academically. If you would like to learn more about Honey Creek Community School, please attend one of our enrollment meetings in January. Our calendar can be found on our website, honeycreekschool.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Al Waters". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Al Waters
Executive Director
Honey Creek Community School