



Upcoming Events: SUMMER VACATION!!!

Index:

| | |
|--|-------|
| Director's Note, Vision/Mission/Belief | |
| Statements & Goals | 1-4 |
| Phoenix Rising, Scrip, Outreach Notes | 5 |
| Board, Academic Service-Learning, Wellness | |
| Committee, & PTO News | 6 |
| Direct Withdraw Form | 7 |
| Elementary School News | 8&9 |
| Middle School News | 10 |
| Specials & Cross Country News | 11&12 |
| After School Programs | 13 |
| Contact Information | 14 |

Greetings all,

Director's Notes:

I hope that your summer is off to a great start, and that you have found some time to enjoy this spell of warm weather. The teachers have been working very hard to complete their end of the year reports, and I plan to email all of them by mid-week.

This has been a busy year at Honey Creek, and much has been accomplished. Thanks to the efforts of our faculty and community, Honey Creek was once again accredited by AdvancED. Immediately after the accreditation team's departure, the administration and faculty began working on the recommendations made by AdvancED. This August, I will be submitting a report to them outlining the progress that we have made toward those recommendations.

Additionally, our faculty has received significant notice by the greater educational community. In January, the school received "Charter State Champs" for 100% proficiency in eighth grade reading. Later in the year, Joe Griffith was recognized by Michigan Association of School Boards. He received an "Excellence in Education Award" for his units on Homelessness and Economics.

Along with their work in the classroom, our teachers have been sharing Honey Creek's integrated project based approach through professional presentations. Last November, Salli, Tammy, and Mary presented a workshop at the Michigan Public School Academy Conference, and this November, Stephanie and Barbara, and Bill and Jon will present as well.

As the state legislature escalates its dependence on data to judge student and teacher performance, the data provided from this effort will provide both families and the state with a broader understanding of individual student progress and teacher quality.

While the work our faculty does in the classroom focuses on utilizing basic skills to develop creative and critical thinking skills, both MEAP and the TerraNova scores point to high levels of performance among our students. That being said, we fully recognize that standardized tests provide a limited scope of a student's actual ability. With that in mind, I have initiated a conversation with faculty from both Eastern Michigan University and Michigan State University with the intent of exploring how we can document methods that demonstrate both the reliability and validity in how we evaluate our student progress. This work will address an element of our Strategic Plan, and also provide us with a far more balanced picture of actual student achievement.

This year Honey Creek has renewed its emphasis on the element of our charter that calls for us to share our approach with the greater educational community. We have expanded our relationship with EMU and look forward to having more pre-service teachers in our classrooms. We also established a working relationship with U of M by providing an administrative practicum experience for one of their graduate students.

Additionally, we continue to develop our working relationship with the Southeast Michigan Sustainability Coalition (SEMI) which will further our dedication to environmental science and eco-justice while expanding curriculum based service opportunities. Our work with SEMI has led to joint activities with Ann Arbor Learning Community and a developing relationship with the Boggs Educational Center. Finally, Honey Creek is the first Public School Academy to be asked to participate in the countywide director's groups for both technology and special education. These successes demonstrate that Honey Creek Community School is emerging as a significant contributor to broader educational efforts in the county and the state.

Our successes as well as the positive views of our school so often shared by the Honey Creek community have led to a significant increase in applications to our school. This year we received ninety applications for our twenty-seven kindergarten seats, and approximately one hundred seventy-five total applications during our open enrollment period, which ended on March 15. Since that time, our office has been fielding three to five inquiries each week. I fully expect that Honey Creek will turn away well over three hundred families this year. While this is a great position for Honey Creek, I'm saddened that so many families have limited educational options.

While Honey Creek is working hard to create greater educational success for our students, we find ourselves constantly assessing our financial well being as the State cuts funding. Last year the state cut equaled \$470 per student. This year, we will receive another \$40 per student cut. Unlike many larger districts Honey Creek is projecting that it will not need to tap into its reserve fund balance until the 2013-14 school year.

Finally, the Honey Creek faculty has been working diligently on the instructional and curriculum goals in our Strategic Plan. At this time, we have set some very ambitious objectives, and I have asked the Board of Directors to provide additional professional development days and resources to complete this important work. Please look for an email later this summer that outlines the tasks we intend to address this year. I'd also like to make you aware of a fourth goal that was developed by the strategy team in May. The team recognized that our initial three goals did not address the broad range of talent that you, our community, so eagerly share both in and out of the classroom, and this goal, we believe, will address, support, and enrich the contributions so selflessly made by all of you. I have provided the major elements of our Strategic Plan below.

Have a wonderful and safe summer,

Al

Vision Statement:

Honey Creek Community School will be a model for high K-8 student achievement articulated through curriculum, assessment, instruction, and reporting.

Mission Statement:

Honey Creek Community School provides an outstanding education of the whole child so individual students reach their academic potential through a rigorous, project-based curriculum and a community focus. Honey Creek students develop critical-thinking skills, a positive self-image, and an appreciation and respect for diversity.

Belief Statements:

- We believe that students learn and flourish with experiential, integrated, and thematic instruction.
- We believe that there are experts of all ages in our community who contribute to student learning.
- We believe that the development of cooperative learning strategies and the ability to work successfully as a team member are essential life skills.
- We believe that every individual is entitled to a respectful environment that is both physically and emotionally safe in which he or she can develop to his or her full potential.
- We believe that it is essential for children and their families to be active participants in students' education, their school, and their community.
- We believe that celebrating academic, personal, and civic achievement promotes enthusiasm for learning and supports a positive self-image.
- We believe that fostering genuine relationships between the High Point and Honey Creek communities creates opportunities for students to share the joy of life viewed through a broad lens of human experience.

- We believe that curriculum based service learning projects enhance student learning.

- We believe instruction is academically rigorous when students are challenged to research, explore, and synthesize complex topics to develop a deep understanding of core subjects.

- We believe students demonstrate their learning as they share, explain, and transfer their new knowledge.

- We believe that our intentional commitment to small, multi-age classrooms leads to strong relationships that promote the development of each student.

Goals:

Curriculum: All core academics will be aligned both vertically and horizontally with the Common Core Standards and/or GLCEs and integrated with: (1) curriculum based service, (2) projects emphasizing environmental sustainability.

Instruction: All classrooms will have high quality differentiated (same learning outcomes, different means) instruction that is integrated, project-based and challenges each child to achieve at his or her greatest level.

Reporting: All grade levels will provide consistent and informative reports on student achievement, social growth, and classroom activities.

Community: Sustain and enhance Honey Creek Community School by encouraging and connecting the time, talent, and resources of our entire community.

Note: Specific action plans, metrics, and timelines will be developed with input from the faculty, administration and community. As those action plans are developed they will be share with the entire Honey Creek community.

Strategy Screen:

Any strategy must meet the following criteria:

1. Support the Honey Creek Community School Mission
2. Be aligned with the Honey Creek Community School belief statements
3. Be sustainable in terms of human and financial resources
4. Meet quality criteria, i.e. do whatever it is really well
5. Communicate the Honey Creek Community School story
6. Possess measurable academic and social outcomes

Phoenix Rising Campaign

There is now an option to use a direct debit form to contribute to Phoenix Rising. Using the ACH will make contributing to Phoenix Rising easier for some people! Please return the completed form/voided check to Shellee Almquist or Karen Giltrow. Your information will be kept safe. Thanks!

Scrip News

Contact Alex Foulis with any questions: alexfoulis@hotmail.com

Outreach Committee News

The **Honey Creek Internal Communications Survey** is now complete. The Outreach Committee has begun using the data to make further improvements to the school website and to develop more effective ways of welcoming families of newly admitted students. We received 100 completed online surveys and one hardcopy response. Thank you again to everyone who took time to respond to the survey. The data will be useful for a variety of projects going forward.

It was nice to receive positive feedback about so many things that the school is doing. Respondents commented about improvements to the website and the existing new family welcome efforts. Not surprisingly, there were many glowing comments about the teachers and staff at Honey Creek. In addition to the compliments there were significant constructive criticisms. The suggestions for improvements are already generating discussion about improvements to the way we communicate.

Welcoming Newcomers

More than half of the responses were from people who joined the Honey Creek community since 2009 – so their memories of being a newcomer are still fresh. We will continue to experiment with improvements to how we welcome new families to the school. Several newly admitted families attended the STEM Fair and the Curriculum Celebration this spring. An invitation to summer play dates has already gone out to newly admitted families and the PTO leadership is already thinking about ways to improve the newcomers' experience at the school's kick-off picnic in late August. One obvious lesson is that any effort current Honey Creek families can make to welcome newcomers makes a big difference.

Email Rules!

The survey data confirmed that the vast majority of our internal communication occurs via email. Since 83 percent of survey respondents frequently check their email during the day, this seems to be a good way of staying in touch for *most* Honey Creek families. However, the survey responses also show that many people feel overwhelmed by the volume of email they receive – and there are still a few families in the Honey Creek community who are not regularly online.

We did a rough count of the number of Honey Creek "all" email messages a family with two students at the school received over the 2011-2012 school year. The average was about 50 messages per month (with another 20 messages that are classroom or grade level related). Some months were much higher. For example, in the month of April, 2012 we exceeded 70 "hccs-all" messages. The Outreach Committee is working together with the administration and the PTO to explore ways for diminishing the volume of general email. Part of the solution may involve helping families to organize and pre-sort the email they receive. Another idea is to provide room parents with orientation to online tools such as "sign-up genius" and "doodle" for use when communicating with parents about volunteer opportunities. In the past, Bill Van Loo has provided some guidelines

for use of various school email lists. We will be looking at existing email protocols and exploring what other improvements might help to redirect non-general interest email.

Conflict Resolution

Survey respondents provided feedback on communication about the various conflict resolution methods taught at Honey Creek. There is strong interest among families in learning more about conflict resolution techniques as well as a hope to extend the practice of constructive, respectful conflict management into the home as well as the school.

It wouldn't be possible to summarize here all of the data or the many great suggestions that respondents shared through the survey. The "zoomerang" link below gives access to the data (minus the one hardcopy response) so that anyone can explore the data on their own. Please contact Will Hathaway (hathwill@gmail.com) or any member of the Outreach Committee if you have questions or suggestions for improvements to the school's communications.

Board News

The HCCS Board of Trustees Met
May 23, 2012

-Bill Van Loo reviewed his comprehensive three year technology plan and goals. He will email a summary to the community outlining the plan with the complete document to be added to the web site.

-The board reviewed the first reading of both the calendar and budget for the 2012-2013 school year with a vote to finalize both anticipated at the next board meeting.

-Discussion continued regarding the option of hiring a management company and Al will continue follow up.

-Al also presented information regarding the administrative and financial challenges of HCCS.

-The board would like to welcome Nina Nabors and John Lonsway who have been elected to the the Board with a three year term starting in the 2012-2013 school year.

-Although their terms are not yet up, the Board would also like to extend it's appreciation to Scott Mahler, current Board president and Will Hathaway for their support and service to our wonderful school.

-The Board meets throughout the summer with meetings on June 27 and July 25 at 5:30 in the High Point reception area (ie. the Pit).

The August meeting will be confirmed as part of the 2012-2013 calendar. As always, the meetings are open to the public and we hope to see you there. The meeting minutes are available on the website for review as well.

Respectfully,

Kelly Krawcke

HCCS Board Secretary

Academic Service- Learning:

Wow. I'm constantly amazed as I walk through our school and see all the service in action. Walking through a huddle of parents discussing summer gardening, seeing middle schoolers stop to teach 4/5s how to handle conflict, witnessing an organized group make some terrific ideas a reality....all these things help make Honey Creek so special. Many opportunities will continue throughout the summer, both to help at Honey Creek and in the community at large. Please continue to share these moments with your children and jot down these experiences on an AS-L log (located outside the aftercare office). Soon we will have a total of all hours recorded from June 2011 until now. I anticipate this number being even higher than last year and know that it is only a fraction of the service that is being done. As always, I would like to gather stories of some of the work you're doing. New families to Honey Creek often ask me for ideas and I'm happy to share what I know. However, your experiences are so much more diverse and inspiring that I would like to compile some of these stories into a service journal for families to look through. Please e-mail me at jthompson@hc.wash.k12.mi.us with any tidbit you're willing to share. Thank you and have a terrific summer!

Wellness

Committee News

Thanks to all volunteers who helped with the rainy Earth Day celebration on May 7. Although much of it was indoors the kids still got to get their hands in the dirt and had a lot of fun with the indoor games.

Thanks, too, to all parents who provided fruit for the fruit bowls this past year! The kids benefit from these fresh snacks. Fruit bowls will be available in the classrooms next year too.

Summer Wellness meetings are being planned for June 25, July 26, and August 16. If you are interested in attending one or all of the meetings, please contact Jane at janneden@sbcglobal.net or Deb at tantrefarm@hotmail.com for more details.

PTO News

No News

Honey Creek Community School ACH Authorization Agreements

Direct Payment Withdrawal Authorization Form

I hereby authorize the HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION to initiate debit entries, from my account indicated below, for payment of the amount listed on this agreement. I, also, authorize HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION or CHELSEA STATE BANK to reverse any debits made to such account in error. This authority is to remain in full force and effect until HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION has received written notification from me of its termination in such time and in such manner as to afford HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION and CHELSEA STATE BANK a reasonable opportunity to act on it.

Date _____ Name (Print) _____ Financial Institution Name _____

Employee Number/SS# _____ Account Number _____ Financial Institution Number _____

IMPORTANT! CIRCLE TYPE OF ACCOUNT: CHECKING or SAVINGS

Please Withdraw \$ _____ from my account

once a week, on the ____ day of the week

or

once a month, on the ____ day of the month

or

every ____ months on the ____ day of the month

Signature _____ Amount _____

CHECK ONE:

I am not currently participating in the Direct Payment Withdrawal Program

ADD - Withdraw my payment from the account shown.*

I am currently participating in the Direct Payment Withdrawal Program

CHANGE - Change financial institutions and/or account number.*

CANCEL - Stop my participation in the program

TAPE YOUR VOIDED CHECK HERE

NOTE: Always get the Financial Institution Number from a check; never use the information from a deposit slip.

Early Elementary News

Thank you all for an incredible year! It has been such a pleasure to get to know your children and to watch them grow over the course of the year. Thank you for all the different ways you have supported our work in the classroom and for being such an important part of the school community.

Many parents ask us about options for practicing academic skills over the summer. If you wish to do so, there are many options. After school has ended, you will receive your child's final CPC, Continuous Progress Chart, via email. (If you need a paper copy instead or haven't received it electronically by the end of June contact the office.) The CPC will include your child's final reading level. You can consult the reading level guide we handed out at the beginning of the year to see what kind of books to read over the summer.

If you wish to practice math with your child over the summer, you can use the packet of word problems we sent home during the previous math unit to solve problems at your child's level. In addition, our students will have access to their Compass Learning accounts over the summer. The website is <http://www.thelearningodyssey.com/>, the school name is honey creek and your child's user name and password are the child's first initial and last name (for a few children it is first initial, first initial of their first last name, then last name).

Middle Elementary News

Thank you for sharing your 2nd and 3rd graders with us this year! We look forward to seeing the wonderful things that await your child next year.

The 2-3s had a Spelling Bee organized by students Kira Sheibar and Eli Atkinson. The winner was Eli Atkinson, although we applaud all of the 18 contestants that volunteered for this event.

Many children also participated in the Track and Field events that Darnell organized in late May. Are we lucky to have Darnell working with our children, or what? In terms of luck, Mary, Salli and Tammy are also grateful to Mary Masson, the Minnock boys' grandma, who has been and will continue to be working with the 2-3 teachers to strengthen our reading and writing instruction.

We had a great time exploring plants in our last science unit. There are so many opportunities to continue the plant study that we will also incorporate plants next year into our Native American and Michigan history units.

Summer is a great time to keep up all the great reading your child has been doing! While you're doing that, please support the PTO Read-A-Thon and keep the Run-Walk-A-Thon on your calendar for September 29th. A few math facts here and there would also really help keep the skills sharp.

Later Elementary News

With the school year ending, 4/5 students have reflected on their language arts learning this year. It has been a really fun and informative task. Below are some quotes from these reflections, but make sure to check out your student's essay! I also want to thank all families for their support this year as students worked through some really challenging independent projects. Fifth graders should be feeling very confident about their ability to tackle middle school projects and fourth graders are very well prepared to manage these projects more independently next year.

Some essay quotes:

- *In language arts class I have found many skills we learn to be useful. One example is our myth assignment. I've never liked speaking, or been good at it. Reading myths has also never been an interest of mine. With this project we not only had to read and memorize a myth, but take on a character and retell it. This was very difficult for me, and although I didn't do great, it helped me--5th grader*
- *I think I learned the most when we read Maniac Magee. I observed how the author wrote and used what we discussed to improve my own writing--5th grader*
- *The reading this year changed me a whole lot. I've got better writing because of that--5th grader*

- *I like that we got to work in groups sometimes and the projects were fun, not boring paper worksheets--4th grader*
- *I learned a lot this year. Some stuff was the same as 2/3, but in a more complex manner--4th grader*
- *What had the biggest effect on me is my writing. I used to write in long blocks but Johnny helped me put them in paragraphs and now I love writing--4th grader*

I've greatly enjoyed working with your kids this year in social studies! They are an insightful, thoughtful, and highly capable crew! We ended the year discussing the lead up to the American Revolution, and while we didn't have a chance to address the conflict itself I believe students came away with a relatively clear picture of why it happened. I wish you all the very best for an enjoyable and relaxing summer filled with interesting and thought provoking social studies related conversations!

Middle School News

Social Studies

No News

Science

No News

Mathematics

No News

Language Arts

We wrapped up our mystery fiction unit with a variety of activities. We played the board game, Clue, then watched the movie. We have read a few of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, and then during the last week of school, we watched one of the episodes of the modern BBC series, "Sherlock." Finally, to finish off the year, we will be playing a murder mystery role playing game. What fun we have had!

In order to reduce summer lag, make sure your middle school student keeps up their skills by continuing to read (beach novels work!) as well as write (summer journaling?) daily! See you all in the fall!

Elizabeth Scott

Middle School Language Arts
Teacher
Honey Creek Community School

Specials News

Physical Education/ Swimming

I would like to say thank you to all of the students for working so hard this year throughout PE and Swim! You all did a wonderful job and I'm so proud of you!

I would like to say thank you to all of the staff and administration at Honey Creek for the continuous support, insight and for helping me grow as an educator.

And lastly I would like to thank the parents for all of the help and support during PE Play Day, student/staff basketball game, field hockey, after school basketball and most importantly encouraging your child/ren to participate to the best of their abilities during their PE/Swim classes.

I am proud to say that at the end of this school year 100% of 2nd-8th graders are deep end swimmers and 40% of our K1's are deep end swimmers. This is solely due to their hard work and determination to succeed.

Once again, thank you all. Honey Creek will always have a special place in my heart.

Cross Country Team News

Greeting Parents and Future Honey Creek XC Runners,

Cam McCord started Honey Creek's first cross country team this school year and the Phoenix harriers performed outstandingly in their inaugural season. With Cam leaving, I am excited to take the reins this fall and continue the fun and unique athletic environment already established.

To help plan for the fall, below are scheduled meets our student-athletes will participate in; including Honey Creek's first ever invitational! We hope to add additional meets and those dates will be shared as they are scheduled. I will be sending out an email with a summer workout program. This workout is geared toward runners and individuals who are planning to play a fall sport or those who just want to stay active over the summer.

I am looking forward to the upcoming season and working with Team: 2

~Darnell

2012 HONEY CREEK XC SCHEDULE

Dual Meet vs St. Thomas (AA) @ Honey Creek

Thursday, September 27, 4:15 PM
5th, 6th, 7th, 8th grades

Gross Point Academy Invitational @
Gross Point

Thursday, October 11, 4:15 PM
6th, 7th, 8th grades

Honey Creek Invitational

Tuesday, October 16, 4:15 PM
5th, 6th, 7th, 8th grades

Hillel Academy Invitational @
Farmington Hills

Thursday, October 25, 4:15 PM
6th, 7th, 8th grades

Practices will be held Tuesday-Thursday,
3:30 – 5:00 PM

Technology

No News

Music

Thank you so much to everyone who was able to attend our Spring Performance. It was a wonderful show and the students did a fantastic job. We have learned so much in all the music classes this year and the bands and choir have created such beautiful music. I would like to remind any student borrowing an instrument from the school, that it needs to be returned to me for summer maintenance and storage. I would also like to invite the parents of next year's fifth grade students to the beginning band meeting on the first day of school next year, Tuesday, September 4th at 12:00 pm. A representative from Marshall Music will be present to speak about the instrument rental process. Recently, these upcoming fifth grade students had the opportunity to try-out band instruments and pick their top three favorites. I will be emailing these parents with their students' selection a week prior to the meeting so they can discuss instrument choices and be prepared for the meeting. If you have any questions please contact me at kgates@hc.wash.k12.mi.us I wish everyone a fun summer and remember to practice your instruments!

Media Center

No News

Art

The year has come to a close and I am very proud of the spectacular amount of hard work and creativity that has gone into each project during this wonderful school year.

Our K/1 classes have finished up their hot air balloon projects and had a fantastic trip to the University of Michigan Museum of Art. Our 2/3 classes wrapped up their Jasper Johns alphabets, and 4/5 classes completed their Picasso portraits. Middle School students did a wonderful job finishing their optical illusions in colored pencil, and elective has done wonderful work on their final projects, taking inspiration from an artist of their choice to create a piece of art.

This has been an absolutely wonderful second year at Honey Creek for me, and I am so excited to come back in the fall and continue to work with our creative bunch! I hope everyone has a wonderful summer! Be sure to check out Artsonia to see some our awesome final projects!

[www.artsonia.com/
honeycreekcommunity1](http://www.artsonia.com/honeycreekcommunity1)

After School Programs

SPECIAL CLUBS: We will soon be planning activities for the 2012/2013 school year. Please email afterschool@hc.wash.k12.mi.us if you are interested in running any of these activities (or others) next year:

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------|--------|----------|-----------|--------------------|
| 4H | Baseball | Writing | Drums | Football | Orchestra | Rockets & Robotics |
| Yoga | Knitting/Sewing | Gymnastics | Crafts | Fitness | | Soccer |
| Language Lessons (Chinese, French, German, Spanish) | | | | Campfire | | Study Skills |

REGISTER NOW FOR SUMMER CAMP! Camp is filling up fast. Please reserve your spot soon to join us for a fun-filled summer. Information and registration is available outside the After School & Camp Programs office and at <http://honeycreekschool.org/summer-program>

Honey Creek Community Schools

1735 S. Wagner Rd.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
Phone: 734-994-2636

Director

Al Waters
awaters@hc.wash.k12.mi.us
734-994-2636 ext. 2210

Assistant Director

Shellee Almquist
salmquist@hc.wash.k12.mi.us
734-994-2636 ext. 2220

Need to submit something to next month's newsletter?

Email submissions to Amber Byers at:
abyers@hc.wash.k12.mi.us
by the last Friday of the month!

We're on the Web!

<http://honeycreekschool.org>