

HONEY BUNCHES OF NOTES

HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Dear Community,

September has been a very busy month at Honey Creek. Teachers and students are engaged, and much learning is taking place. This time of year, many of the teachers are completing their initial assessments, which guide them in the process differentiating both their curriculum and instruction to yield greater academic outcomes. Please reserve a slot at the conferences scheduled for October 17th and 24th. This is a great opportunity for you to discuss your child's present academic level as well as the plan for addressing his or her continued achievement.

Part of assuring the continued academic growth of all students is providing for the regular professional development of our teachers. This year, three of our teachers, Salli Kropp, Teresa Gonzalez-Woods, and Cindy Wauer will be participating in the second level of Assessment Literacy training. This experience will qualify them as trainers, and they will be mentoring Tammy Hall, Mary Bassett, Cheryl Quinn, and Johnny Thompson through the initial stages of the program. The training is targeted toward developing the following outcomes:

Students will:

- Take ownership in their own learning
- Reflect on their strengths and weaknesses
- Be motivated for further study of topic
- Develop a deeper understanding

Teachers will:

- Align instruction to the learning target
- Allow for differentiation for individual student needs
- Collect accurate data for review of student achievement

I want to thank those of you who have worked with Shellee to enlist in our new online system. To date, she, Karen, and other members of our support staff have worked with this system to bring on our general ledger, accounts payable, cash receipts, and student billing and receipts. Additionally, we are close to implementing online enrollment, reenrollment, and attendance records. Shellee has accomplished all of this while working with our auditors to complete a flawless annual audit. Shellee's quite awesome!

Your School Board has also been hard at work. The Board recognizes the hardships created by cuts in state funding as well as the numerous unfunded mandates, which have been put in place over the past few years. At our Board Retreat in September, the Board established several strategic goals to address funding and other issues. You will find an outline of the Board's work later in this newsletter. Accomplishing these goals will be a central focus of the Board and administrations work over the next few years.

Finally, please keep in mind our upcoming conferences, walk/run-a-thon (Oct. 18th) and Fall Festival (Oct. 24th).

Have a fun and safe autumn!

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SERVICE LEARNING

Service-Learning and building a spirit of service in order to positively impact the world are core components of Honey Creek Community School's mission. Curriculum-Based Service-Learning happens in the classrooms, but many students are motivated to serve others outside of school hours as well. Each year we recognize students and families who spend 50+ hours/year serving others with the President's Volunteer Service Award.

The deadline to submit hours is June 10th, 2015. An awards ceremony will be held the following year to honor all recipients. On the subject of awards ceremonies, we hope to honor those students who earned the 2013-2014 award as soon as our awards arrive.

In the meantime, thank you for supporting our students as they learn to become philanthropists, giving of their time, talents, and treasures to benefit the common good. In short, thank you for being heroes!

K-1

Journeys is our year long theme in K-1. We have four thematic units over the course of the school year which we refer to as "My Journey", "My Journey Through School", "My Journey Through the Community", and "My Journey Through the World". Throughout each thematic unit is the overarching concept of patterns in journeys.

The children are working toward understanding that learning what we teach them helps them to see patterns, they can make their own observations to discover patterns, and when they discover patterns, they can make informed choices.

We introduced the children to this year's theme by discussing the definition of a journey, different types of journeys, how life is like a journey, and how learning helps you on your many journeys. We read the Dr. Seuss book, "Oh, the Places You'll Go" and the children got a blank map to draw some of the places they might want to go to or journey to some day.

In "My Journey" the children have begun to explore family diversity, self-identity, and personal histories through a variety of activities. We will proceed to learning about heredity, plant and animal life cycles, and family histories.

K-1 will be going on our first field trip of the year on Thursday, October 30th to the Leslie Science and Nature Center. We'll be exploring The Sensory Trail and getting prepared for our next theme unit "My Journey Through School."

2-3

Welcome to the 2-3 classrooms. We are delighted to have Julie Sampson as our Instructional Assistant this year. Julie is a certified teacher and will work one-on-one, with small groups or with the whole class at times. She rotates between all three classrooms

September is always a busy month. We spend a lot of time teaching, modeling and perfecting routines and procedures. Student responsibility is a big theme in 2-3. Additionally, because we differentiate for students and are constantly meeting with small groups, the rest of the children need to be able to function productively and independently.

Teachers have been busy doing reading assessments, which we will share with you at conferences. All children have a book box and it should be filled with Just Right books. While teachers want children to ultimately make the choices of what to read, we will step in if children are continually making poor choices. As we head into October, teachers will start/continue to meet with small groups during reading time, focusing on comprehension, accuracy, fluency and expanding vocabulary. All classrooms spend a chunk of time reading a class book. After reading, children respond in writing to a variety of prompts to show comprehension and/or practice other reading skills. Our first class book with Mitt the Michigan Mouse. Mitt travels all through Michigan which got us started in Michigan geography. October will find us starting The Birch Bark House as a class and also learning more about nonfiction reading.

There are many facets to writing and we work on them all in 2-3! Some of our students still need work printing and forming letters properly. All students are studying spelling and phonics patterns in our weekly word study lessons. While we work on grammar, usage and sentence structure, the exact focus varies in each classroom month to month based on the needs of the students. All classrooms are working through the writing process of brainstorming, drafting, revision, editing and publishing. We work especially hard on building stamina in our writers. 2nd graders should be able to get at least a half page down in one sitting, stretching this to one page in third grade.

Our math for September has included assessments in math facts and learning about place value. A huge goal of 2nd grade is for students to memorize the sums of all one-digit numbers and to be fluent in the reciprocal subtraction facts. 3rd graders need to memorize the multiplication facts through 9x9 and be fluent in the reciprocal division facts. To help keep track of these, classroom teachers use an overall facts test in September, January and June and use smaller timed tests every week or two to chart student growth. In October our mathematicians will continue their learning about place value and also start working on specific strategies for addition and multiplication.

The first half our year will have a social studies focus, with science leading the way starting in January. All classes are learning about Michigan geography now and will follow this up with the economy in Michigan and government.

4-5

In literature, the later elementary students have been journeying into the world of poetry. We've explored free verse, found and nature poems as well as haikus, limericks, cinquains and slam poetry. We've gone outside for inspiration as often as weather and time have permitted and students have enjoyed sharing out their work at the beginning and end of classes. During this unit we've also discussed figurative language, specifically: similes, metaphors, onomatopoeia, imagery and hyperbole. Over the next few weeks we'll learn about a few more styles of poetry, continue to edit and make final copies of poetry and compile each student's poetry portfolio (these will be on display in January). We are also planning a grade level poetry reading for students to share their favorite work with everyone. Look for a date and time to be announced soon. This will be an open invitation for families as well!

In science, we are learning about scientific inquiry and the scientific method. We started with an overview about who was a scientist and what do they do! While a lab coats and test tubes were certainly discussed, it was refreshing to hear kids talking about how anyone could be a scientist and the realization that science happens everywhere! No lab coat necessary! We have been learning how to write a good hypothesis. You've no doubt heard about the infamous gummy bear lab by now. Your student can tell you what a hypothesis is (hint: don't accept "an educated guess" anymore.) We have moved forward to discussing observation and it's role in science. Bruce Worden, scientific illustrator, came in and spent the morning with the three classes. He told them about his job, how art and science are related and worked with them on observational drawing. We'll be moving on to more experiments while we talk about variables and conclusions. Then, we take a journey into geology!

Social Studies students have been learning (and have been tested in their abilities) to identify and locate the seven continents and five oceans. From there, we have been studying maps--- ALL KINDS of maps! We begin the year's studies with this unit because the curriculum really needs them to understand the different themes of geography, and the relationships it holds with the other sub-disciplines of Social Studies, i.e. History, Civics, Economics, and Government. Likewise, this unit lends itself to the necessity of paying close attention to details. Students have been practicing to read, study, and create maps carefully to relay and connect new information to prior knowledge.

Middle School

Biosphere 3

In middle school science we are investigating different ecosystems around the world and what it takes to maintain life there. Many different factors affect life in each intricate area, so while we learn about them we also have to take into consideration how humans play a part as well. Eventually, each student will create their own "biome" as part of their culminating project. Watch out for introductions to NEW SPECIES that they've discovered along the way!

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

ON-SITE EXTENDED DAY STUDENT CARE **WILL** BE AVAILABLE ON THE FOLLOWING “EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS:” October 17th & 24th; February 6th; March 20th & 27th; April 24th; and May 8th. If you have not already registered online, please register ONE WEEK BEFORE in order to receive the Early Bird Discount. Also, please remember that you **MUST** give us 48-hour WRITTEN notice to cancel any pre-registered care without being held financially responsible.

REMINDER: **NO ON-SITE STUDENT CARE DURING BREAKS OR ON CERTAIN HOLIDAYS.** This includes: October 27th; November 27th & 28th; December 22nd-January 2nd; January 19th & 20th; February 16th-20th; April 6th-10th; May 25th; and June 10th.

SPECIAL CLUBS. There are still openings for the following after school special clubs:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Music Lessons	Music Lessons	Music Lessons	Music Lessons	Music Lessons
MS FH & CC (til 10/16)	MS FH & CC (til 10/16)	Black Belt (10/8-12/17)	MS FH & CC (til 10/16)	Chess K-8 (10/3-12/12)
JRLEGO til 12/8	Italian (9/23-12/16)	Girls Soccer 2nd (til 11/5)	5-6 FH (til 10/17)	Swim Fitness (9/26-12/12)
LEGO 4-8 til 11/24	Swim Lessons K-8 (10/1-12/17)	Silks - FULL (9/26-12/19)	LEGO 4-8 till 11/24	Sewing 2-8 (11/7-1/30)
	Art K-3 (10/7-12/16)	Art 4-8 (10/8-12/17)		

Please pick up a registration form from the after school programs bulletin board down the hall from the parent mailboxes. Please stay tuned for information on these and other activities:

4H, Ballet, Baseball, Basketball, Campfire, Capoeira, Chinese, Cooking, Crafts, Dance, Drums, Eco-Maniacs, Electronic Music, Fitness, Football, French, Gaming, Garden, German, Gymnastics, Harp, Hip Hop, History Club, Juggling, Korean, Knitting, Orchestra, Photography, Pilates, Rocks & Robots, Rockets, Skateboarding, Spanish, Spiral Scouts, Soccer (K-8), Study Skills, Stunts, Tap Dance, Tech, Tennis, Theater, Tutoring, Volleyball, Writing, Yoga, Youth In Government, Zumba,

PLEASE CARE WHAT YOU WEAR. Recess will be outside everyday. Except for hazardous weather conditions (lightning, severe storms, wind chill below -10° F), we will always go outside for recess. There is limited indoor space that allows the children opportunities to move around energetically. Children should always dress for the weather. Students must wear snow pants, boots, coat, hat, and mittens or gloves in order to play in the snow and sled.

3 Year Vision (Future Date: September, 2017)

- Energized community supporting HCCS goals and lending their expertise
- Synergy between Board-PTO-Foundation and Faculty
- All families participate (volunteer hours and financially)
- Faculty/Administration morale is high
- The Board:
 - 9 members; 1 “at-large” member
 - Strategic board recruitment
 - Continuity of strategy and leadership from HCCS Board
- Monetize our expertise
- Partnership with educational institutions with resources
- HCCS is a sponsee of a major funder
- Economies of scale with other Charters
- Defined partnerships with High Point
- Robust, structured, consistent After-care enrichments programs
- Academic Service Learning: teachers receive professional development and students have integrated projects
- Foreign language curriculum
- Rewards system and resources are increased/market competitive and titles have been reviewed
- Adaptive administrative team to support developing needs (team of 3)
- Predictability of revenue
- Pipeline of revenue continuity built
- \$500K per year of funding from HCCS Foundation
- Fund balance at 20-25%
- Assessed feasibility of replication or expansion
- Student population is more diverse
- Strategy in place for facility planning
- Sustained model of support through interns or college affiliates
- In-kind donations from local businesses
- Outcomes measures that track long and short-term success

1 Year Plan (Future Date: September, 2015)

- Supplemental reward for returning teachers
- Financial Plan to support goals
 - Fund balance $\geq 12\%$
 - Monetize expertise
 - Partner with resources
 - Economies of scale
 - Predictable revenue pipeline
 - Federal/State grant applications
- \$150K from HCCS Foundation
- Synergy between Board-PTO-Foundation and Faculty
- Staffing plan for Administrative/Curriculum needs
- Board development:
 - 9 members
 - Flexible/strategic/continuity
 - Updated By-Laws, Articles, Policies
- Assessment: replication, expansion,

90 Day Plan (Future Date: 11/30/14)

Goal Means & Measures	Who
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergy between Board-PTO-Foundation and Faculty • Creation of message 	<p style="text-align: center;">Board</p> <p>Multi-faceted communication strategy</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental reward for returning teachers • Review 	<p style="text-align: center;">SA</p> <p>Analysis of options</p>
<p>Finance Committee</p> <p>AW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Plan • Initial Review • Recruit resources • Prioritize plan recommendations 	<p style="text-align: center;">Finance Committee</p> <p>Define plan elements</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$150K from HCCS Foundation • Administrative staffing plan • Job descriptions • Talent options identified 	<p style="text-align: center;">Foundation Liaison</p> <p>Communication need and strategy</p> <p>Needs defined</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Development • Policies revised 	<p style="text-align: center;">AW</p> <p>By-Laws revised</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment • Identify outcomes for 2/28/15 	<p style="text-align: center;">Governance Committee</p> <p>Identify team</p> <p>Board, PR, AW</p>

Board Committees

<p>Finance Committee: Jon Lonsway (Chair), Angie Tracey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate financial records and statements • Budget oversight and preparation • Audit and compliance • Financial Plan 	<p>Governance Committee: Nina Nabors (Chair), Greg White, Karen Andrews, Pam Reiser</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board self-assessment • Board professional development • Board recruitment/elections* • By-Laws, Policies • Director's Evaluation
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<p>Communications & Outreach Committee: Christine Kelley (Chair), Yvette Atkinson, Karen Andrews, Nina Nabors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synergy strategy • Communications (external and internal) • Website • Liaison/consult with PTO, Foundation and Faculty
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