

HONEY BUNCHES OF NOTES

HONEY CREEK COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Dear families,

I hope that your holidays were filled with family, friends, and fun. While on break, a great deal of work was completed in our building. Ceiling tiles were removed from all of the classrooms in the main building, the area above the tiles cleaned, the grids were painted, and new tiles installed. All of the floors in the building were cleaned and waxed, and the gym floor was completely resurfaced.

You may be aware the State released last year's M-STEP score the week before break. Parent Reports arrived that Friday, which left little time to get them sent home. I will be sending them home with students on Friday, January 8. Please check your child's planner or Friday folder for the report. At this time we have not received comprehensive reports from the state, so we can answer specific questions regarding the parent report, but do not have additional information, which should become available within the next few weeks.

The new assessment, the M-STEP, is aligned to our new state standards. It is more comprehensive and requires greater critical thinking and problem solving skills. The state predicted significant reductions in proficiency percentages, and like schools across the state, Honey Creek did see those reductions; however, our students' performance remains competitive with the highest scoring districts in the county and state. Because this is a new test, historical performance data does not exist.

The tables below will provide you with the percentage of students who scored proficient or better in the state, county, AAPS, and Honey Creek. Honey Creek percentages have been highlighted to indicate where our school falls when compared to the other three. Percentages highlighted in

January Events

Mark your calendar

January 15th

Curriculum Celebration 18th

MLK Day no school

19th records day no school

20th & 25th Enrollment Mtgs. 5:30-7:30

27th

Board Meeting

February

Leap month 5th

Professional Development 1/2 day

10th Count Day 15th-19th

Mid-winter break 24th

Board Meeting

blue indicate that the percentage of Honey Creek students scoring proficient or better exceeds the state, the county, and AAPS. Scores highlighted in green indicate that the percentage of Honey Creek students scoring proficient or better exceeds the state and the county, and Scores highlighted in yellow indicate that the percentage of Honey Creek students scoring proficient or better exceeds the state. If you have questions, fell free to contact your child's teacher or me.

Happy New Year,

Al

Mathematics				
	State	ISD	AAPS	HCCS
Grade 3	48	60.2	71.6	64.3
Grade 4	41.4	55.4	68.4	46.4
Grade 5	33.4	50.6	64.2	48.2
Grade 6	33.3	51	60.1	69.2
Grade 7	33.3	51.6	60.1	63
Grade 8	32.2	48.3	62.1	65.2

English Language Arts				
	State	ISD	AAPS	HCCS
Grade 3	50.1	54.6	64.4	78.6
Grade 4	46.6	54.2	64	75
Grade 5	48.7	57	65.9	81.5
Grade 6	44.7	57.7	68.8	69.2
Grade 7	49.1	62.6	68.8	77.8
Grade 8	47.6	60.9	71	70.8

Science				
	State	ISD	AAPS	HCCS
Grade 4	12	18.9	23.8	21.4
Grade 7	23	33.2	41	29.6

Social Studies				
	State	ISD	AAPS	HCCS
Grade 5	22	30.6	38.9	33.3
Grade 8	30	43.4	55.8	50

Honey Creek Community School Foundation Update

We are thankful that 2015 was a strong year, and as a result, the foundation was able to give \$100,000 to the school.

At our last meeting, we continued to work on the following items:

Working with alumni to start reconnecting and building a database

Discussing the progress and success of the winter fundraising campaign

Updating our fundraising blueprint

Revising and submitting our bylaws to the state of Michigan

The foundation board will be meeting for an all day retreat at Gladwin Farm on Saturday, January 9th. If you are interested in attending, ask a foundation board member for more information.

CLASSROOMS

Please visit our website to stay up to date with classroom activities. Please continue to read our [blog posts](#) and all emails

K-1

We've begun our next theme unit: "How My Community Works". Our theme song continues with the following verse:

Learning how things work in my community

is important to you and me

Animals, people, stores and homes

We have to share, we can't take it for our own

When everyone cooperates

The community works really great!

This unit includes a unit on Fairness and a unit on Food Systems. The understandings we wish for students to develop through How My Community Works are:

- Understand that my community is a system
- Understand that I am part of many interconnected systems: community, economic, food, farming, etc.
- Understand that when something happens in one part of the community system it affects all of the parts of the community system
- Understand that improving one part of the community system can improve the dynamics of the whole community system

In the Fairness unit, the children will learn about different forms of discrimination (e.g. ableism, gender discrimination, racial discrimination) and the ways people have worked together to make society more fair for all members, including the Civil Rights Movement. The unit will end with a celebration of MLK Jr. Day and the children making a piece of artwork to express their dreams for the world.

<http://honeycreekschool.org/k-1/>

2-3

The first part of January will be spent finishing up our 3D communities and a final opinion piece for our Curriculum Celebration. We hope to see you all on Friday, January 15 in the A-wing center area.

As the 2nd semester starts, we will begin working on narratives (stories) in writing. We are continuing to hear *The People of Sparks* and use this excellent text to help us learn about communities. 3rd graders will be continuing work on multiplication and division facts, while 2nd graders gain skills in regrouping with both addition and subtraction.

2nd graders will also start doing the writing portion on the weekly homework sheet. Look for details from your specific teacher as to exactly when in January this will begin.

<http://honeycreekschool.org/2-3/>

4-5

In later elementary we're learning more about how time management and transitions work! With several large projects in various stages and the return to school after two weeks at home it has been a learning opportunity for all.

In language arts we're getting busy learning how persuasive essays work. This topic is just being introduced and students are going to be picking their topics and forming their thesis statements in the coming week. From there, they'll begin to build their supporting evidence, organize and research, as needed. Look for these at the spring curriculum celebration!

In literature we're launching into tall tales, myths, legends, fables and folklore. As a class students are going to be reading Jerry Spinelli's fictional legend Maniac Magee while independently exploring other books and stories that capture these oral traditions. Eventually all students will choose one specific story, memorize the elements and retell it in first person while dressed as the main character. They will then perform their retelling in front of their class. This project is a lot of fun!

<http://honeycreekschool.org/4-5/>

Middle School

Happy New Year from us!

We are always reminded how special and generous our community of families are from simple words of gratitude, homemade “deliciousness”, and all the way to the extreme kindness of SCRIP donations. Our room parents delivered your generosity towards our staff and we appreciate it from the bottom of our toes! While this online shoutout does not adequately express our gratitude, maybe these hashtag will. #hccslove #hccsmsrocks #joewasintears

On behalf of the Honey Creek Community School Middle School staff

Jon, Cindy, Liz, Joe, Amy, Lauren

MS Math

Course 1 – At the beginning of this year we will be working on a Pattern Block Project to reinforce and learn fraction operations. Watch for the results of these projects at the curriculum celebration. Once we are finished we will dive in for a more thorough understanding of fraction and mixed number addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Course 2 – We are working on a project involving fractions called Amateur Architect. Beyond fractions operations (which are intimately involved), this project also challenges the student in problem solving, reading and digesting instruction. Watch for the results of these projects at curriculum celebration. We will move on to proportional reasoning after finishing operations with rational numbers.

Course 3 – Having completed our dilation project in December we will continue to connect proportional relationships to linear relationships. Toward the end of this unit we will be spending time working with linear functions/equations. A great preparation for Algebra.

Algebra – After having completed a thorough unit on linear functions including various forms of linear equations we will be working on a linear art project. Creating art with lines and mathematically defining the lines. First showing of said art will be at the curriculum celebration. After this project we will be working on systems of linear equations.

Science

At the end of December students completed their projects on their watershed. We can't wait to show Honey Creek all the different watersheds around the world! As we continue onwards with our theme of "Journeys", we will be traveling within the human body to understand not only the functions of all, but how we must cultivate, care for, and maintain our human machinery. As part of the unit, we will be going on a field trip to the University of Michigan Athletic Center and partake in seeing first hand what it means to be the "Leaders and Best". Kristyne will be working with students to design and implement both rehabilitation and strengthening workout regimes that will help address an injury or illness that the students will be assigned.

Social Studies

Lots happening in Social Studies.

We have successfully completed our unit on major civilizations. Students wrapped up the final parts before break and each group put together an interactive "grave" which will be on display during Curriculum Celebration. Please come by and try your hand at guessing who it was that died and what his/her life was like before kicking the bucket. Many groups will have prizes for those who guess correctly.

Since the completion of that unit, we have begun studying the three main civilizations of the Western Hemisphere: Inca, Aztecs and Maya. We will spend more time diving into each unit, starting with the Maya. I have a lot of interactive lessons planned, and interactive project in the mix, and even a song up my sleeve. This unit will eventually lead into Cortes' conquest of the Aztecs, an almost unbelievable story of manipulation and greed.

Finally, I would like to send a heart-felt thanks to all of the families that contributed to my holiday gift. I got a delicious baskets of goodies, as well as a generous scrip order. I want to send a special thanks to Lara Thomas and Erin Peterson for their efforts with this. I feel so blessed to have such a supportive community here at Honey Creek. It was truly one of the things I missed most while being overseas. (Your kids are pretty great, too.)

For information visit us at: <http://honeycreekschool.org/ms/>

Don't forget our Specials

Technology

Happy New Year!

We've got some fun stuff going on in technology. The 2-3 classes have been working on their digital stories using Storyjumper. We just began using a paint app to illustrate the pages of their stories and import them into storyjumper. The 4-5 classes just finished up their invention presentation, and we've begun talking about digital citizenship and internet safety. The middle school classes have been working on a digital citizenship webquest. In the middle school elective, students have been hard at work building their own websites in HTML and CSS.

In other news, we just purchased five 3D printing pens for the school which will be a new addition to the hands-on cart, so look for some cool projects coming up!

<http://honeycreekschool.org/technology/>

Physical Education

Physical Education and Swim

<http://www.honeycreekschool.org/PE>

Music

Happy New Year Everyone!

Thank you to everyone who attended our concert back in December. All of the performers did a wonderful job and I'm very proud of all their hard work. I have added a few pictures to this page taken by our very own Joe Griffith. He did a great job capturing the concert and I appreciate the opportunity to share them with you.

As we look ahead to the new year in music class we will be turning our focus to new units in each grade level. The K-1's will be learning about rhythms and how to create rhythms. In K-1 we start by looking at Ta's (the beginning of a quarter note) and Ti-Ti's (the beginning of eighth notes). They will even get the opportunity to compose their own rhythms using popsicle sticks.

2-3 students will begin learning the recorder. We will be using the, “Baroque Recorder Method” by Ed Suete. And learning the basics of playing the recorder in a group. This unit will last until March. It may sound like a long time, but since I only see the classes once a week it will be about 8 music classes.

4-5 students get to be guinea pigs for me this year as I introduce a new unit on bucket drumming. This is exactly as it sounds, we will drum on buckets. Thanks to Erin Reed and Vanessa Mayesky we have 60-5 gallon buckets to use for this unit. We will learn the basics of reading rhythms and how that translates to drumming. Then, creating an ensemble of buckets and learning how to play together. If all goes as planned we might be playing a bucket song at our spring concert.

5th grade band students will continue working in the red, “Standard of Excellence” book. During this time they have many more notes and rhythms to learn before I can introduce more challenging music for our spring concert. Our goal is to be able to play at least two pieces of sheet music at the concert. This means we will not play in unison, but each section will have a different part of melody, counter melody, harmony, or rhythm.

Middle school band students will also return to our blue, “Standard of Excellence” book. We will focus some in the book and some on sheet music. We will also have our third playing quiz on January 14th.

The middle school choir did a lovely job at the concert. Although it was a small group this semester I think it had many strong singers and we were able to produce a wonderful sound. Middle school students will switch electives soon which means a whole new group of singers. Since it is an elective it’s difficult to know how many students and different voice parts I will have in the choir. Once I know the voices I have in choir then I can order appropriate music for the group. I will give you more information on this group as it becomes available.



Month	Event	Needs	Description
January			
	Teacher Potluck		Parents organize Teacher Potlucks for Parent/Teacher Conferences, Curriculum Night and Curriculum Celebrations.
	Curriculum Celebration		2nd Friday evening Twice a year, the Honey Creek community bears witness to the accomplishments of the students. Projects and art works of all kinds are on display. Students extend their learning as they lead their families through the school and explain what they discovered in working to complete various assignments throughout each semester.
	MLK Day & Records Day	△	No school (two days)
	Enrollment Meetings		After-hours. Returning families do not need to attend to re-enroll their children, but new families must attend to put their name in the admissions lottery.
	WESO Registration		Sign up to participate in the Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad. Grades 2-5. Team coaches needed; no experience required.
February			
	Professional Development	△	No School
	Count Day	△	The number of students present is officially

Month	Event	Quick Code	Description
February			
	Professional Development	△	No School
	Count Day	△	The number of students present is officially reported to the state of Michigan. Attendance today is particularly important, as the official count is used to determine part of Honey Creek's funding.
	Ball & Auction	🎉 🍷 \$	Every two years, the PTO holds a Ball and Auction, to raise money for a major project. Volunteers are needed.
	Talent Night Try-Outs & Art Fair Registration	🕒 🍷	Sign up to participate in Talent Night. Permission forms must be turned in and students must try out to be in the show. (All K-5 who try out will be included in the show. Only Middle School tryouts have elimination.) Volunteers needed to help manage the try-outs.
	Midwinter Break	△	No School 1 week, mid-late February

Board Report

Honey Creek Community School Board of Trustees met December 16, 2015.

Board Members Present: Karen Andrews, Sara Hoffman (arrived at 5:34p.m.), Christine Kelley, Megan Masson-Minock, Pamela Reister, Steve Rich, Greg White.

Staff and Community Present: Al Waters, Shellee Almquist, Sue Hofbauer, Mary Bassett, Karen Giltrow, administrative intern Caleb.

Board Spotlight: TerraNova Assessment Results

Al reported on the Terra Nova test, given to second through eighth grade. Because the state has changed to the MSTEP, and data is still not available (from spring 2015), it is important to have some data on student progress; Terra Nova fills this role. In general, Honey Creek students are showing improvement of at least one grade level per academic year (although timing is tricky, as TN was skipped last year to avoid overtesting in the spring). Teachers have the Terra Nova data for each student, and are able to start using it now.

Director's Report:

--All classrooms and other meeting spaces will be thoroughly cleaned over break, including spaces above ceilings. After cleaning, Al Waters will test air quality monitor again, although he has not seen readings lower than acceptable in the past.

--Media Center/Art Positions: Long term art sub seems to be doing fine, and has applied for the permanent position. Media Center position has received no additional resumes from certified candidates; school may consider filling that position with someone without a Media Center credential. Margaret Wessel-Walker is not returning in January, and someone else will need to fill that role.

--Every Child Achieves Act: Replaces No Child Left Behind. Al Waters expects we will see significant changes coming down from the Michigan Department of Education but these must meet Federal standards. Act renews emphasis on visual and performing arts.

--PA 219 may allow individuals that are retired to return to substitute teach in areas with significant sub shortages.

Finance Committee: Greg White noted that board member and Finance Committee member Andrew Banas resigned. Sara Hoffman noted the committee will meet the first Thursday of January at noon. They will be looking at the budget and what recommendations to bring back to the board, including around teacher raises/bonuses. Board will have the 1st reading of the budget in January to be approved in February.

Foundation Liaison: Karen Andrews reported, indicating that the Foundation has approved new bylaws and board member job descriptions. Bylaws should go up on the website.

Immediate goals for the Foundation include: maximizing return on the end of year appeal; increasing the number of monthly recurring donors/families.

Governance Committee: Pamela Reiser reviewed the updating and streamlining of the employee handbook.

Communications and Outreach Committee: Christine Kelley reviewed work of the committee, which includes continued liaising between stakeholders, work on monthly newsletter, website, email issues, and promoting volunteerism in the community. Next meeting scheduled for January 15, 2016 at 8:15a.m. in the Office Conference Room.

Branding Committee: Steve Rich noted his intention/mission was to play around with logo ideas for the community to choose, not to step on toes. He is open to what the community wants (perhaps the logo for the anniversary spiritwear). He has communicated with Tammy Hall who was unhappy with the way new logos were heading. A discussion followed with a focus on synergy, to make sure vision is shared by all stakeholders and all stakeholders are invited to collaborate.

Faculty Liaison: Mary Bassett noted the teachers' confusion about the logo. Also reported teacher concern over lack of raises.

New Business: Replacing board member Andrew Banas. Karen Andrews and Greg White will reach out to potential members. Board members will also keep in mind we need a replacement for Andrew Banas now and begin to plan for the other two openings at the end of the year.

Other Items of Business by Consensus of the Board: Megan Masson-Minock would like to discuss how the three proposed administrative positions relate at a later time. Al Waters reiterated that the board has not made a decision to hire a third administrator, but are considering the idea.

Board Kudos To:

Katie Gates for a wonderful Winter Performance. Marta England for heading up the craft sale, all the parent volunteers and students who participated.

Next meeting is scheduled for January 27, at 5:30 pm. Public participation is warmly welcomed!

Full board minutes are available at <http://honeycreekschool.org/who-are-we/the-honey-creek-team/school-board>.