



HARBOR BEACH  
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS  
402 S 5<sup>TH</sup> ST HARBOR BEACH MI 48441 989 479 3261

March 22, 2020

Dear Parents and Students:

So much changes so quickly that I realize by the time I publish this letter everything in it could be completely changed. Yet, I want to provide an update of sorts for you as best I can.

Let's start with a reminder: on Thursday, March 13, at around 11:00 p.m., Governor Whitmer announced that all K-12 schools in Michigan would be closed beginning Monday, March 16, 2020, and could reopen on April 6, 2020. Though there are numerous rumors that this return to school date will change, as of this moment the original timeframe has not been extended.

Over the last week we've seen significant changes caused by the COVID-19 situation. We now believe that all state testing will be suspended for this school year. Technically the state of Michigan can apply to the United States Department of Education for a waiver of school standardized test requirements. So, that essentially means we'll not have SAT/PSAT, M-STEP, MME, etc. in 2019-2020.

You may want to know whether our school can count time without students toward our required 180 days of instruction? You may also wonder, can students gain credit at home during this time off? The fact is at this point in time I don't even know. It appears the answer to that depends on how you read Governor Whitmer's statements and Michigan Department of Education statements. I think it is safe to say we all need this to be more specifically defined as soon as possible. The end of the school year is directly impacted by these decisions. At this point no legislative actions have been taken allowing districts the right to waive the COVID-19 non-instructional days. We simply don't know the answer to most questions related to how this impacts our student days. Obviously, this is putting stress on everyone, and perhaps the most stressed are our seniors.

Seniors, my heart truly goes out to you all. I don't have answers to your many questions. Simply put, I can't give you security and a sense of control until we know key things like when we will return to school and whether any days will be waived by the state. I'm sorry; none of this is fair to you - or anyone for that matter. I can promise you as things become clear I'll share them.

I've directed teachers to continue to provide materials and activities to continue learning during our time away. I can't be sure how long this break will be, but I can tell you our teachers are committed to providing learning opportunities for as long as it takes.

During this extended break, every area of our school is being thoroughly cleaned. Mr. Kowaleski's crew has been working full shifts. Before students return, they will have "deep cleaned" every classroom, bathroom, locker room, office, etc. They are cleaning desktops, floors, counters, filters, and every area imaginable.

Lastly, a reminder that all activities are suspended and our entire campus is closed during this time off. Anyone, including employees, on campus must have permission from me. That is correct.



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Absolutely no activities, including practices or small gatherings, can be held. This includes using our fitness center. Again, anyone on campus must have my permission. Also please note, our district's official communication will come via our school webpage, school Facebook page, from the Rave Phone System, or directly from your child's teacher.

These are truly difficult times. I will not lie about that. I've always believed anyone can seem successful and strong when times are good. In 2008 I had a friend in the financial investment business say to me: "You could invest with anyone and see good results when the market was great before 2008. When things are great, everyone wins. BUT when times are bad, you really see who's strong. You look around at that time and discover who your strong, trusted advisors and friends are." Well, Pirates, I implore you, look deeply inside and find your strength. If we truly are the district that I think we are, now is the time to show it. Hold off finding fault with or criticising others for the current situation and turmoil. Find your will to work together and become stronger together by demanding positivity from yourself and those around you. Now is the time to build each other up.

Sincerely,

Dr. Shawn Bishop  
Superintendent