April 2, 2020

Dear Hazel Park Schools’ Families and Community Members,

Over the past few weeks, our community has come together to rally around our children like never before. Although we have had to move fast, in ways that were truly unexpected, our priority together has remained the safe education of our students and for that, I am grateful.

This morning Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed an executive order to officially close all K-12 school buildings for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year, unless restrictions are lifted. As with all of the changes made by the state, this is designed to ensure that COVID-19 does not spread inside of schools and that children and families, along with faculty and staff, can stay safe at home. We know this virus is serious and is taking lives throughout our nation, including here in Oakland County.

This is a hard reality for all of us to face. Everyone is feeling some form of loss right now—a loss of personal connections, routine, activities, sporting events, or even the rights associated with a senior year at high school. We assure you that we are mindful of the disappointments our students and staff may be feeling, and we empathize with you. We are grieving too.

We have extraordinary teachers, administrators, and support staff who are dedicated to building personal connections with our students and maintaining a continuity of education. Together, we will work to find creative and thoughtful approaches to milestone events such as senior celebrations, college preparation concerns, special education goals, literacy progress, and work-family balance. We have asked our educators to consider prioritizing the social and emotional needs of our students and build healing opportunities into our learning. We will also continue to provide meals for those who have signed up for the food service program as well as delivery in cases of illness or disability.

Our experts at the Michigan Ace Initiative emphasize the need for families to simply slow down during a crisis. With that in mind, we are encouraging our entire school community to take a pause during the spring break timeframe, from April 3 through April 12, to tend to individual family needs. Remote learning connections will resume on Monday, April 13, 2020.

In the meantime, if your family has not yet completed the survey regarding device and internet access, please do so by Tuesday April 7, 2020. This will allow our team to understand the final percentage of our students who do not have connectivity in our district. Currently our connectivity is at 60%.

www.hazelparkschools.org
We are extremely proud of the resiliency and resourcefulness of our students and staff as we adapt to a new normal. We know that with this news so many questions will follow. We are working on answers to all of those questions and as we finalize them we will keep you informed. Overall, please know that high school seniors will still graduate, kindergarten through 11th grade will progress to their next grade if they were on pace to do so, and the state’s newly mandated third-grade reading law will not be enforced. Throughout all of this, maintaining strong personal connections remains our focus. So please love each other!

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please continue to reach out to your school principal. We will be giving you more details in the coming days regarding our next steps for curriculum.

Thank you for your partnership and support as we navigate this most unusual school year, together.

With Students In Mind,

Dr. Amy Kruppe
Superintendent