



## *HESPERIA COMMUNITY SCHOOLS*

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11/12/2021

Dear HCS Families,

Hesperia Community Schools **will be extending the 2021 Thanksgiving Break**. Added to the Thanksgiving Break will be **Wednesday, November 24<sup>th</sup>, Monday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, and Tuesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>**. We will return to normal daily instruction on Wednesday, December 1<sup>st</sup>.

The safety and health of our students and staff is the foremost priority for our District. This priority is certainly true when considering the physical and mental health of our staff and students. This school year has presented our families and staff with much higher levels of anxiety and stress due to the unknowns of Covid 19, as well as rising levels of illnesses other than Covid 19. Over recent weeks we have seen many factors contributing to increased absenteeism across all 3 buildings. These factors include:

- Increase in Covid19 cases in Michigan, and West Michigan in particular.
- Increased levels of illnesses such as RSV, Norovirus, and Hand, Foot, Mouth Disease
- Increased Levels of Fatigue, Exhaustion, Stress, and Anxiety

Our hope is that the extended break will allow students and staff to recharge, refresh, and get well. The extended break will allow for students to be separated for 7 days, thus reducing exposure and communicable spread dramatically. It will allow for those with potential exposure over Thanksgiving to become aware or experience symptoms. In addition, HCS will use these days to **deep clean and sanitize the buildings**.

By implementing proactive measures like scheduled days off and deep cleaning now, we hope to minimize absenteeism later. Additionally, we know these days will lessen levels of illness, and burnout among staff and students, allowing a greater degree of learning and engagement to take place upon return.

All of us at HCS wish you and yours a Happy Thanksgiving. We are certainly thankful for the continued patience, consideration, and grace from our District families during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Bryan D. Mey, Superintendent