

December 21, 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Guardians of HHS,

Please read below for important information about our schools as we respond to the changes to Minnesota's [Safe Learning Plan](#) last week. In short - attending and connecting to school and activities is important for students of all grades. While elementary schools prepare for students coming back for increased in-person learning, HHS will increase the connections between students and teachers as we stay in distance learning.

High School Learning Model - Staying in Distance Learning & Increasing Connections.

Secondary schools continue to follow the guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) in planning for a return to a hybrid learning model. While the elementary levels prepare to bring students back for in-person learning, HHS will continue in distance learning. Information that is important in making this decision includes COVID-19 cases per 10,000 in the county, local positive test results rates and data shared between the school district and regional support teams, including public health, MDH and MDE. Any plans to return to hybrid learning will be communicated well in advance.

Increasing Connections. As HHS looks to also increase connections with students, HHS will increase the expectation for students to attend class by Zoom. Starting after break on January 4, teachers will start their classes with Zoom meetings on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and students are expected to attend class on these days. This is a change in expectation from Zoom meetings on Monday and Thursday. Please note that the structure of Wednesday FLEX days will remain the same.

“Why?” We will address the need for increased interpersonal connections for students and teachers, consistency in learning and approaches for parents and students in our schools, and equity and access in learning.

1. As students, educators and parents - we believe in the positive benefits of interpersonal connections. This is the power of “school.” There are students that need more contact with classmates and teachers. During this pandemic, COVID-19 restrictions are limiting our ability to connect in society. In schools, we have the ability to change our approach to provide for more connections. Teachers and students have learned a great deal about teaching and learning in a distance learning environment so far this school year. We plan for learning that incorporates variety, both synchronous and asynchronous learning, small group connections and a wide-range of interactions using Zoom, Schoology and digital learning tools.
2. It is important that we have consistency in learning, schedules and expectations between the school levels as much as we can. Consistency helps all to be better organized and clearer in what is expected, even though there are differences by the nature of the students' ages. In addition, it is important for our school district to adapt to changes for our employees and provide for consistent employment practices.
3. For some students, engaging with school will be the most important and sometimes the only way they can access their classmates and the curriculum in order to learn. Completing schoolwork on their own is difficult given circumstances in their lives - attending school is not about “showing up.” It may be the only time they connect with classmates and interact with the curriculum and learning.

Attending class Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday for Zoom meetings starts January 4.

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Changing the learning model and approaches make sense to some, while is a confusing move to others. We are taking as much care with our planning as we possibly can. Please read the last edition of the district's [RaiderUpdate](#) for more detailed information.

Elementary Learning Model Change - January 19 for Grades K, 1 and 2. Students in grades kindergarten through grade 2 will attend full-time, in-person learning 5 days per week. The elementary school time schedule remains the same as when the district was in hybrid (school begins at 9:40 and ends at 3:25). Any child who participates in the Hastings Online Academy will continue learning virtually 4 days per week with Wednesday Flex Days.

Guidance from the state requires a "rolling start" which means that we plan for children in grades 3 & 4 to transition to full-time, in-person learning 5 days per week beginning February 1.

Learning Model Change - Elementary Requests Only. As a result of the elementary learning model change, we are offering families of elementary children an opportunity to make a change to their child's learning model (in-person, hybrid and distance learning or Hastings Online Academy). Please note that this request to change models is only for elementary students - high school students had the ability to change models for semester 2 in mid-November.

Yearbook The yearbook staff continues to develop the 2020-21 HHS Yearbook! Please click on the link below for a "sneak peek" at the yearbook. Thank you to advisors Ms. Phillips and Ms. Gandrud, and the entire yearbook staff, for creating such a great book of memories.

Here is the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eutZNYgQiMo>

On behalf of the entire HHS staff - **THANK YOU** for your continued support!

Mike Johnson - HHS Principal