



HARTLAND CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS

Chuck Hughes, Superintendent

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April 15, 2026

Communication Interruption Notice

Hello District Families,

For years, HCS has used a product called "InTouch" for district communication via email, text, and phone calls. We have used this communication platform for such things as the alerting of snow days, daily attendance calls, low lunch balances, weekly update letters, and more. HCS received notification just after 5:00 p.m. on April 8, 2026, that the company that runs the InTouch communication product is ceasing operations "effective immediately".

Fortunately, we can send mass email communication through our student records system, MiStar. We are actively working to find a suitable alternative solution for InTouch and are pursuing options that have existing integrations with the MiStar student records system.

We will keep you informed and alert everyone once a new system has been put in place. In the meantime, note that mass communication will be occurring through email and that mass calls and mass texts are currently not an option. Please make sure your email address is correct in your Parent Portal, so you do not miss any important communications from the district.

Congratulations to Mrs. Lauren DePestel - HCS 2025-26 Teacher of the Year.

Lauren is an exceptional educator, advocate, and person who embodies the values of the district. Teaching within the students with diverse needs program, Lauren works with a wide range of students, providing them with a program built on high expectations, dignity, and authentic relationships. Her classroom extends far beyond traditional academics, as she manages the Peer-to-Peer program, oversees the school coffee cart and recycling program, and organizes monthly community-based field trips to provide her students with meaningful, real-world experiences.

Lauren's ability to balance these responsibilities while serving as a dedicated case coordinator and mentor to her peers is considered nothing short of inspiring by those who work alongside her. A cornerstone of Lauren's impact is her leadership of the Hartland Unified Sports program, which positively impacts the culture of the high school. Under her guidance, Hartland was named a Special Olympics Unified Champion School. The program has seen exponential growth, expanding from a small group to over 100 peers who participate annually in sports like basketball, soccer, and bocce ball.

Lauren's dedication to the Hartland community is unwavering and often extends well beyond the school day. Whether she is offering a simple arm around a shoulder to a student in need, or providing expert advice to colleagues on how to support diverse learners in their own classrooms, Lauren's influence is felt everywhere. As her nominators noted, she is universally respected and loved because she sees everyone as important and equal, making her the perfect representative for Teacher of the Year.



High School Principal James Fitzgerald, HEA Teacher of the Year Coordinator Kristin Raap,
Teacher of the Year Lauren DePestel, and Superintendent Chuck Hughes

Congratulations to Mrs. Bridgette Stanaway - HCS 2025-26 Support Person of the Year

It is an honor to recognize Bridgette Stanaway for her extraordinary dedication to the students and staff of Hartland High School. Bridgette exemplifies what it means to be a dependable, positive, and hardworking member of our community here at Hartland High School. Her friendly and cheerful demeanor creates an environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and supported. The students adore her because she creates a safe, welcoming environment where every student feels seen, valued, and capable of reaching their full potential.

No task is ever too big or too small for Bridgette to take on. She consistently goes above and beyond, offering help before it is even requested and doing so with genuine enthusiasm. Her strong work ethic and commitment to excellence ensure that everything is handled with care, efficiency, and professionalism. She shows a true love for her job and the students that she works with daily.

What truly sets Bridgette apart is her upbeat and unwavering spirit. Even in the busiest or most challenging moments, Bridgette maintains a positive attitude that lifts the morale of those around her. Her encouragement, kindness, and willingness of all students makes a meaningful difference every single day. She is a team player and just wants to see every single student live up to their potential. She has never doubted the ability of anyone she works with, and is constantly lifting others up and striving for them to do their very best. Her leadership is most visible in her work with the Hartland Unified Sports program, where she mentors peers and cheers on our athletes with genuine enthusiasm.

Bridgette embodies the heart of support — dependable, compassionate, and always ready to help. She is certainly deserving of recognition as Support Person of the Year.



High School Principal James Fitzgerald, Support Person of the Year Bridgette Stanaway,
Support Person of the Year Coordinator Cristal Briskey, and Superintendent Chuck Hughes

Parent Guidance Available

Parents seeking help with parenting can visit the [Hartland Schools Website](#) and click on the ParentGuidance.org icon for information on what is available through a county-wide initiative. Below are some videos that parents may be interested in on this journey.

Local Videos

[Livingston County You Don't Have to Parent Alone](#)

[Livingston County A Parent Coach can Help](#)

[Livingston County Everybody Needs a Coach](#)

[Livingston County QB United Join Our Team](#)

[Livingston County STAY HERE Suicide Awareness](#)

LACASA Shares Emerging Trend Concern

At the end of this newsletter is a letter from LACASA regarding an emerging trend / concern letter regarding a video game that is alarming. I am sharing this as a parental awareness notification.

Lakes Teacher Recognized

Lakes Elementary Teacher Mrs. Julie Barb was recognized by WNIC as the Jay Towers Teacher of the Week. We are proud to have Mrs. Barb working with our first graders.



Mrs. Barb and WNIC's Allison

Reaching Higher Opportunities for Students and Adults

Reaching Higher is launching a two-day camp this summer -- the **Reaching Higher "Plant Great Seeds" Leadership Camp**. The camp is for children who are entering grades 2-5 in Livingston County next school year. The day camps will be hosted at two locations. The first camp is June 8-11 from 9-3 at Challenger Elementary School in Howell. The second camp is August 3-6 from 9-3 at Country Elementary School in Pinckney.

If you are interested in becoming a **Reaching Higher Instructor**, Training is coming up June 16-17 in Brighton. At the end of this Weekly Update are flyers with additional details.

Hartland Consolidated Schools Thanks Mrs. Nicole Lusk

Thank you, Nicole, for being a keynote speaker for Child Abuse Prevention Month! Nicole spoke at LACASA's annual Pinwheels for Prevention Event, highlighting Child Abuse Prevention Month. She spoke about the HOPE (Health Outcomes from Positive Experiences) training that she has done with the high school, alternative education and middle school staff. Training staff on the ways that we can create positive experiences in a child's life is just one way Hartland Schools supports safe, healthy and positive environments for our students.



Nicole Lusk, HCS's Student Assistance Coordinator

Potential Bond Program Projects Meeting With The Community

Last week, I hosted a community meeting for all community members wishing to discuss the current potential bond project list. This list has been developed with the input of 24 different groups, see page 2 of the presentation. I had 11 community members attend the meeting to provide their thoughts about what has been captured since October of 2025. The presentation has been updated to reflect all accumulated thoughts. Please click here to see the updated presentation: https://d16k74nzx9emoe.cloudfront.net/750dd5bb-53b0-441f-95e3-5ba27bad0ab9/2026-04-13-Potential-Future-BOND-Ideas_ada.pdf

Please note that this is simply a list of potential items to be considered by the Board of Education for a future bond proposal. The hope is to begin working with the Board of Education in the next couple of months to discuss the list. Feel free to reach out to the Board of Education members with any thoughts or concerns you may wish them to consider. I want to thank everyone who attended these meetings for the thoughtful and deliberate conversations.

Reminder: School of Choice Enrollment Open

Please share with family and friends that Hartland Schools is accepting enrollments for school of choice students for the fall of 2026. It is understood that transportation to and from school is the responsibility of all school of choice parents. The district will try to provide bus transportation at the closest active in-district bus stop to the residence of school of choice students, and where seats are available on the bus. This will require school of choice parents to work with transportation personnel, as district bus transportation is not automatically assigned. The phone number is 810-626-2175. Please visit the links below for enrollment information:

Enrollment website:

<https://www.hartlandschools.us/Parents--Students/Enrollment/index.html>

School of Choice Application Process:

<https://d16k74nzx9emoe.cloudfront.net/10f3df68-b241-42b9-8f84-f5b026922326/School%20of%20Choice%202026-27%20Guidelines.pdf>

HCS Enrollment Form:

<https://www.hartlandschools.us/Parents--Students/Enrollment/index.html>

Where Eagles Soar,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chuck Hughes".

Chuck Hughes

“It is important to learn to be done with certain situations, without feeling mad or bothered.
Instead, be at peace with yourself and move on.”

Anonymous

***Notice of Web Accessibility:** In order to remain compliant with web accessibility when sharing this Weekly Update, any public service announcement shared with me must be forwarded with a link that I can include in the text for people to view information if they choose to do so.*

Dear Superintendents and High School Principals,

As we mark National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we are writing to bring your attention to a troubling trend emerging among students nationwide involving an online video game referred to as "Five Nights at Epstein's."

Based on the popular video game "Five Nights at Freddy's," this game is deeply concerning. As players pretend to be sexual assault victims trapped on the convicted predator's island, it draws on themes of sexual abuse and trafficking in a way that trivializes and sensationalizes the experiences of hundreds of actual victims, including children. By framing these realities as entertainment, it risks desensitizing young people to the seriousness of exploitation and further dehumanizing those who have suffered.

As this content circulates through online platforms and peer networks, we encourage you and your teams to remain vigilant. Awareness is key, not only in recognizing when students may be engaging with or referencing this game and others like it, but also in addressing its implications. These situations can serve as important opportunities to reinforce values of respect, empathy, and an understanding of the real-world impact of abuse and exploitation.

What to watch for:

- Students referencing the game by name or discussing its content casually or humorously
- Jokes, memes, or language that minimize or mock victims of abuse or trafficking
- Increased use of inappropriate or sexualized humor tied to real-world individuals or events
- Students showing or sharing gameplay, videos, or related content on devices

How to respond:

- Address the behavior promptly and calmly, making clear why the content is harmful
- Redirect conversations toward respect, empathy, and the real impact of abuse and exploitation
- Avoid amplifying the game itself, while still setting firm expectations around appropriate conduct
- Engage school counselors or support staff when needed, especially if students appear distressed or impacted
- Communicate with families when appropriate to ensure awareness and reinforce consistent messaging

We also recognize that many educators and families may feel uncertain about how to approach conversations like this. LACASA is here to help. Our team can provide:

- Age-appropriate educational resources for students
- Guidance for educators on navigating sensitive discussions
- Support for families addressing these topics at home
- Training for staff on recognizing and responding to issues related to abuse and exploitation

You can learn more about this troubling trend by clicking [here](#).

We are grateful for your leadership and your continued commitment to the well-being of the students in your care. If you would like to contact our team or access resources, please do not hesitate to reach out by calling (517) 548-1350 or email info@lacasacenter.org.

Together, we can ensure that our schools remain environments where empathy, respect, and accountability are upheld.

With appreciation,



Bobette Schrandt
LACASA President & CEO



Elizabeth Stahl
Vice President of Children's Services



DAY CAMP for students in grades 2-5



Plant Great Seeds Leadership Camp

Students will grow their confidence, make friends and build empathy all in a fun, four-day summer camp setting!

CAMP 1

WHEN: June 8-11,
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

WHERE: Challenger
Elementary School, 1066
W. Grand River Ave., Howell

COST: \$200

CAMP 2

WHEN: Aug. 3-6,
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

WHERE: Country
Elementary School, 2939
E. M-36 Pinckney

COST: \$200



REGISTER
HERE!

reachinghigherinc.org



Do YOU...

Love working with children?
Have strong listening skills?
Have a teaching background?
Care about helping others?

Are YOU...

Enthusiastic. Quick-witted
Professional and Passionate?

THEN...

TAKE ACTION

JOIN THE MANY INSTRUCTORS HELPING
STUDENTS REACH HIGHER!

CURRICULUM CONTENT INCLUDES:

- Instruction for proprietary Reaching Higher curriculum
- Facilitator's guide
- Student/participant guide
- Direct one-on-one instructor coaching
- Monthly hour-long instructor coaching calls for a year after certification
- Annual refreshers + other events
- Online training resources

REACHING HIGHER

JOIN THE HUNDREDS OF
REACHING HIGHER INSTRUCTORS &

TAKE ACTION

REACHING HIGHER 2026
INSTRUCTOR CERTIFICATION



When & Where

BEGINNING JUNE 2026
2-DAY COURSE

Tues., June 16; 9A - 4P | In-person
Wed., June 17; 9A - 4P | Brighton, MI

For more information,
contact Ann Mettetal

P: 810-220-8812

E: ann.mettetal@reachinghigherinc.com

www.ReachingHigherInc.org



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