

Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart
Superintendent

Board of Education

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August 3, 2020

Dear Hazelwood School District Faculty and Staff:

It is with extraordinary gratitude that I welcome you back for the 2020-2021 school year! We find ourselves at a defining moment in the history of Hazelwood School District and our country.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced us to make radical changes to our daily lives. Face-to-face connections have been replaced with Zoom connections. Debates over in-person school versus virtual school rage across the country. All of this while COVID-19 infections are on the rise in our region. In response, we made the decision to have all HSD students begin the school year virtually.

Our county has also witnessed an unprecedented push for racial justice and equality. To be clear, Black Lives Matter today, tomorrow, and forever in HSD. As a district, we are taking decisive actions to ensure equity and equality for all our students and staff. Our efforts began with a ground-breaking student-led panel regarding race and equality in July. "Breaking the Silence, HSD Student Voices on Racial Justice and Equality" gave our students a platform to share their concerns about what they have experienced in HSD and the surrounding community.

HSD will be on the right side of history when it comes to safety and equality.

Despite the challenges we face, our district has much to celebrate. In June, we held three virtual graduation ceremonies for the Class of 2020. The ceremonies allowed our community to celebrate the wonderful achievements of more than 1,000 graduates without compromising safety. After earning nearly \$30 million in scholarships, almost 70% of the Class of 2020 are set to continue their education in the fall at wonderful colleges, universities, and trade schools. About 4% of graduates have joined the armed forces. Members of the Class of 2020 have also successfully entered the workforce. Since March, we have provided more than 500,000 meals to HSD families through our Grab and Go Meal program. To close the technology gap, we have secured chrome books and mobile hotspots for every HSD family with technology needs. The district has also created a robust calendar of professional development opportunities for teachers focused on virtual instruction. Financially, we continue to maintain a balanced budget and make key additions to our staff at every level.

In July, the Board of Education approved the Reopening and Pandemic Plan 2020-2021 School Year. From the start, development of the plan was an inclusive process that focused on new safety measures, instructional methods, and learning opportunities. Talented work groups consisting of administrators, teachers, and curriculum coordinators have provided the tools we need to educate students this school year. In a bold, yet wise move, the district made the decision to implement Contingency Phase 2 of the plan, which calls for all HSD students to begin the school year in the 100% virtual school model. Our commitment to safety does not stop with our students, the vast majority of our staff will also work virtually through the first quarter. When conditions related to COVID-19 improve, the district will make the blended school model an option for families.

To connect with colleagues and learn more about the upcoming school year, I invite you to the following districtwide virtual event:

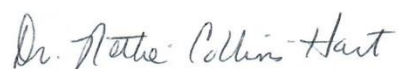
- The Hazelwood School District's Virtual Convocation on Wednesday, August 19, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Staff will receive a link and login code via email.

As we embark on an exciting new school year, I find comfort knowing that we have the talent, resources, passion, and character to successfully navigate any challenge.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to HSD. The 2020-2021 academic year awaits!

Sincerely,

Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dr. Nettie Collins-Hart".

Superintendent