



# Holly Area Schools

*Excellence in Action!*

July 22, 2024

Dear Parents and/or Guardians of Holly Area Schools,

I hope this letter finds you and your family in good health and spirits and that you're enjoying summer with friends and loved ones. Today, I am sharing some important updates as part of our district's ongoing commitment to supporting the mental, social and emotional well-being of our Bronchos in addition to their academic success.

Over the past several years, we have prioritized the health and wellness of our students, staff, and families with new investments in safety and security measures, added mental health staff, coordinated programs and events with local, county and state agencies, and provided access to educational resources.

This past Spring, we began a new series of communications found on our district website under the [student mental health](#) tab. We have been particularly concerned about the impact of Smartphones and Social Media on student mental health, social behavior, and academic performance. In April, we shared research showing excessive use of Smartphones and time on social media contributes to youth depression rates, bullying, attention problems, anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders, suicide and other mental health issues on the rise.

At Holly Area Schools, we believe face-to-face social interaction is crucial for developing social skills and building meaningful relationships. We also know that distractions in the classroom significantly reduce focus and comprehension. Distractions during the unfortunate event of an emergency incident can also impact response time and ability to follow instructions.

In August, parents will be able to review updated code of conduct policies in the Student Handbooks. These will also be posted on our district website, and include the following updates for cell phone use:

- **Grades Y5 - 8 (Elementary and Middle School): Smartphones or other electronic communication devices will be prohibited from being used throughout the school day.**
- **Holly High School: Smartphones are prohibited from being used during all class/instructional time (anytime class is in session).**

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## Administration Office

920 Baird Street  
Holly, Michigan 48442  
Phone: 248-328-3100  
Fax: 248-328-3145  
www.hask12.org

**Scott M. Roper**, Superintendent  
**Jennifer Herbstreit**, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum/Instruction  
**Steve Lenar**, Asst. Superintendent Administrative Services  
**Jennifer Lauria**, Director of Special Education  
**Tricia Murphy-Alderman**, Director of Human Resources

Further details regarding the updates in policy will be available to families next week when the official window for student verification opens. Look for another announcement in the coming days with directions on accessing the “Skyward Online Verification.”

As we look forward to a new school year, I strongly encourage all students and parents to explore the extracurricular offerings available at our schools. Participating in these activities can be a key component of a well-rounded education and instrumental in promoting mental health and well-being.

As we move forward, let us continue to support our children in every aspect of their growth. Our goal is both their academic success and the development of healthy, resilient young adults. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the well-being of our Bronchos.

Our collective efforts and partnership can make a significant difference in the lives of our students.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Roper, Superintendent  
Holly Area Schools