

# ChalkTalk

AN UPDATE FROM HILLSBOROUGH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



It is a pleasure to be able to resume our ChalkTalk communications. The COVID-19 pandemic affected our entire society, and our schools were not immune. Summer — when school is out of session — is normally a quiet time in school districts, used for maintenance and long-term planning. Summer 2020, a year ago, was nothing like that. The coronavirus was not yet well understood, and the tradeoffs between in-person education and virtual instruction, and the consequences for the education of our young students, were challenging, complex and full of anxiety among students, staff and parents.

Under such difficult circumstances, we are very proud of what Hillsborough City School District was able to accomplish. We began returning our students in special education programs to in-person education as soon as was legally permitted. Our youngest learners — those with the least health risk, but for whom virtual education was the least effective — returned to our campuses in October 2020. Our middle school students began returning to in-person instruction in November with all students who chose in-person learning back on campus in January.



We still offered the choice of virtual instruction for those families who preferred that option. But most of our students opted to return to in-person education once we were able to offer it. And, with a lot of help and sacrifice from our teachers and staff, we were able to offer full-time in-person instruction: five full days per week. (Almost all of our neighboring districts started in-person instruction much later in the year, and generally only in hybrid format, alternating between in-person and virtual instruction for each student.)

In order to successfully implement in-person education, the District took safety very seriously. We offered regular Covid testing for our students and staff, wore masks indoors, and organized the student days to isolate cohorts from each other and minimize contact between large groups of people. As a result, we had only a few positive cases on campus during the year and essentially no on-campus virus transmission.

We have now begun a new school year this fall and are thrilled to slowly take the first steps to a “return to normal”. The pandemic is not yet over, but as we slowly start to emerge back to a semblance of normal life, we can return our attention to addressing other challenges facing our schools. One such challenge is updating our local classrooms, labs and school facilities to ensure they are safe, modern and meet current learning standards. Please read on for more information on this topic.

We wish you all a safe and happy winter.

**Don Geddis**  
President, Hillsborough City School Board

## HILLSBOROUGH CITY SCHOOLS



**NORTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



**SOUTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



**WEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



**CROCKER MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

November 22 – November 26	Thanksgiving Break
December 8	Board Meeting, 6:00pm Crocker Lecture Hall
December 20 – January 3	Winter Break
January 4	School Resumes

### STAY CONNECTED

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# ChalkTalk highlights

## A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT



Thank you for your tremendous partnership as our school district successfully navigates this pandemic. The strong partnership between our parents, educators and community allowed us to

effectively offer the choice of in-person or virtual education last year for our students and staff. We thank you for your continued support and attention as we look forward to all of our students having the opportunity to be fully vaccinated in the coming weeks.

During the next (and hopefully last) stage of this pandemic, our goal is to continue our strong collaboration with parents and our dedicated community to provide excellent educational programming for all Hillsborough City School District students. The successful start for this school year would not be possible were it not for the fact that we work closely with our HCSD families, the Hillsborough Schools Foundation, the Associated Parents' Groups, the Town of Hillsborough and many more civic and community organizations. Our students' success is something that should make us all proud, especially during these unprecedented times.

As a school district, we set high expectations to foster a learning environment that supports social-emotional growth for all students, which is needed now more than ever. The children of HCSD deserve an excellent education, and along with all our stakeholders, we will continue working together to offer the high-quality education they deserve during these trying times.

With appreciation,  
**Dr. Louann Carlomagno**  
Superintendent

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF LOCAL SCHOOLS

Education has changed over the last few decades and most of our HCSD schools were built in the 1950-1960s. School health, safety and instructional standards have changed significantly, and our facilities have not kept pace and are not designed for 21st-century teaching and learning. Prior to the pandemic, the district completed a Facilities Master Plan that included an assessment on all District buildings and grounds that identified a comprehensive list of repairs and improvements needed in our schools to provide a safe and modern learning environment for our Hillsborough students.

Some of the projects identified include repairs to aging leaky roofs, deteriorating plumbing and electrical systems, updating fire alarms and communication systems to ensure student safety and enhancing educational spaces to enable collaboration, project-based learning and high levels of student support.

## UPGRADING HILLSBOROUGH SCHOOLS

While the Hillsborough City School District continues to address repair and maintenance issues, the upgrades identified in the Facility Needs Assessment are far beyond what can be funded from the District's regular operating budget. The Board of Trustees is currently exploring funding options to address facilities needs impacting student safety and current academic standards.



Outdated HVAC unit at South Elementary School



Outdated and broken fume hood in Crocker Middle School science classroom

## QUALITY EDUCATION IN HILLSBOROUGH CITY SCHOOLS

Hillsborough City School District provides exemplary educational programs for students in local elementary and middle schools. State test scores regularly put our district in the top 1% of all school districts in the state. Our success is rooted in our dedicated teachers, staff, board and parents' commitment to nurturing children socially, emotionally and academically. Hillsborough's high achieving schools improve the quality of life in our community and protect the property value of our homes.

## AGING SCHOOLS REQUIRE REPAIRS AND UPGRADES

While our students continue to achieve at high levels, our schools are in need of repairs and upgrades to support a high-quality, modern education. Currently, the outdated classrooms and facilities are costly and inefficient to operate. Additionally, updates are needed to ensure the safety of students and have schools meet current earthquake and fire safety standards.

A recent assessment of our schools identified the following high-priority needs:

- Upgrade classrooms for science, technology, engineering, arts and math instruction
- Repair and upgrade deteriorating roofs, plumbing, electrical, heating and cooling systems
- Ensure schools meet current earthquake and fire safety standards
- Upgrade classrooms and labs for the hands-on instruction needed in the 21st century
- Improve classroom computers and technology



Outdated windows with dry rot trim at South Elementary



Deteriorating exterior of a portable at West Elementary

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF HILLSBOROUGH CITY SCHOOLS

The facility improvements identified at local schools is beyond the scope of the District's current maintenance budget. District leaders are currently evaluating options for funding these improvements. One option under consideration is a school improvement bond measure to provide dedicated local funding for repairs and upgrades that would be exclusively used for Hillsborough City Schools facilities.

We welcome your feedback and questions as we consider our options to meet current facility needs. To share your opinions, priorities, or to ask questions, please visit [www.hcsdk8.org](http://www.hcsdk8.org) or contact Louann Carlomagno at [lcarlomagno@hcsdk8.org](mailto:lcarlomagno@hcsdk8.org) or (650) 342-5193.