

Hello Forest Hills families. Thanks for tuning in to the second edition of the Forest Hills Forecast. In just a moment, you'll hear from the Forest Hills Public Schools Foundation. We are grateful, so deeply grateful, for everything the Foundation has done for the district, over 30 plus years, the support of parents, of students, of teachers, of the entire district. Thanks to everyone who gives to the Forest Hills Foundation.

And also this week, we are collecting the input from our students. We've heard from families once, we've collected input from our teachers and staff, and now we're hearing from our students. And again next week, we'll have a second survey going out to all parents of the district. This survey is conducted in conjunction with all 20 school districts that are part of the Kent Intermediate School District, and this will give an insight into your thinking and feelings about school for the fall. And this information will be very important not only for Forest Hills, but for all of the districts who are working in collaboration throughout the county.

So please, take a moment to listen to these remarks from the Forest Hills Public Schools Foundation, and thank you for all your support. I'll see you again next week.

Thanks.

Hi, my name is Jana Siminski, and I have the privilege of being the director of the Forest Hills Public Schools Foundation. While I am disappointed that we can't all be together today, I am excited about this new opportunity, this opportunity for us all to join together to support the fabulous educators and students a Forest Hills. For the first time, we are not landlocked by how many

people we can squeeze into Watermark, but instead we can share this message with the entire Forest Hills community.

I would like to thank our Foundation sponsors. You'll notice them on the banner behind me and on the screen. I would also like to thank Caroline Tilton the State of the District Luncheon Chair and all the fabulous table hosts that are helping us share this message. While this wasn't the event we anticipated when we began planning, your role is more important than ever. Thanks for supporting the Foundation, the district, and thank you for encouraging others to do the same. In the past, we've used the luncheon to share highlights of the district as well as to share how the district is moving to a new model of education, embracing more project-based work to deepen student learning and engagement.

This year, we've asked Superintendent Behm to address the current coronavirus pandemic as it relates to K through 12 education and specifically Forest Hills Public Schools. But before I turn it over to Dan, I want to thank you all for taking the time to watch this video and thank you in advance for considering a gift to support educators and students.

It's been reported that districts across the state will see a budget cut next year perhaps up to 20%. Community support will be more important than ever. Gifts received in this 2019-2020 school year allow us to respond to needs during the 2020-2021 school year. And no matter what school looks like in the future, the one thing we do know is that these funds will still be needed now more than ever. Now, I'm going to turn it over to Dan.

Hello, and thank you for sharing your time with us today. Like Jana, I wish we could all be together in the same place. I always look forward to the State of the District luncheon and to seeing you all and having the opportunity to highlight the fabulous work of the educators and students across our district.

First, I'd like to take the opportunity to thank you for your patience and understanding as we moved from traditional in-school learning to remote learning. I'm grateful for the incredible work parents, students, teachers and other staff members have put forth to bring about the large-scale transformation. Adapting to challenge is an important lifelong skill. We are all finding our resiliency in the face of change, loss, and uncertainty.

Consider this, Forest Hills is larger in enrollment than 95% of the school districts in Michigan. In a matter of a few weeks, we adapted to a completely new delivery system with over 1,000 staff members, 10,000 students working with their parents and families, and thousands of households throughout our community. Teachers are leaning into this new challenge and collaborating with one another like never before. Within 30 days, teachers have become masters of Zoom and Loom programs. They have converted thousands of lessons to new formats and have collectively spent more than 100,000 hours in personalized instructional sessions with students of all grade levels. We have conducted hundreds of virtual team meetings to update student individualized educational plans.

Furthermore, we have had tremendous support from our non-teaching staff members to help pull this all off. Our support staff members distributed over 1,200 Chromebooks to families, reconfigured every wireless network at 17 school buildings to allow for remote access to Wi-Fi, and distributed nearly

150,000 meals to students. These support staff and teachers are unsung heroes in this crisis, and I and so many others are grateful for their sacrifice, ingenuity and hard work.

Due to the Foundation's help over the years, and with the expertise of our partners at Steelcase, we are now well versed in a change in development protocol known as design thinking. At the heart of design thinking is both empathy for the end user of any system or product, and an organization's commitment to continually act to meet the needs of the end-user. This continual action is known as iterating. Armed with feedback from parents, students, and teachers, we are iterating the remote learning experience.

In the event that we have to return to remote learning in the future, we will be able to deliver a more robust teaching and learning experience with greater support, more accessibility, and far less juggling of emails and web links. The result will be deeper learning for students, more support for teachers, and less stress for parents.

As we look to wrap up the school year, circumstances require us to rethink and adapt many of our culminating traditions. A huge part of the educational process is celebrating growth, developmental milestones, and the teamwork that is at the heart of reaching pinnacles that we could never attain on our own. Learning is social. Students long to be side-by-side with their peers, friends, teachers, and school staff. We missed the sounds of spring sports, end-of-the-year performances, and the applause of parents and grandparents celebrating their loved ones. I'm confident that these sounds in traditions will once again ring out from our schools and play fields.

Perhaps most important, for our graduating seniors, we long to reconnect one more time in person. This is why we are not giving up on commencement. We are looking at doing this outdoors, in late July, in a safe manner, and most importantly, in a way that honors our nearly 800 graduates. Our high school principals are working hard on this and you will hear more in the days to come.

As our thoughts turn to the new school year in the fall, we acknowledge that it's impossible today to predict the prevalence of the virus in late summer and throughout the fall and winter. Consequently, we are planning for multiple contingencies related to school operations. Let me be clear. Our intent is to reopen schools for in-person teaching and learning. Additionally, we know it is possible that some families may want, or even need, a remote learning program. Students who have compromised immune systems or who live with an immunocompromised family member will need such a system until effective treatments or a vaccine are realized or we push the virus out of our region completely. We are developing multiple contingency plans in the event that we cannot fully reopen our schools.

As we move throughout the weeks ahead, you can expect to hear more from the district about these contingency plans and our plans for a more robust remote learning program in the event we need to deploy such a program. Again, our first intent is to reopen schools for classroom-based teaching and learning.

There's one more major challenge moving forward—the issue of funding for schools. As you know, the vast majority of funding to operate public schools in Michigan comes from the state government through a fund called the School

Aid Fund. Careful projections show this fund falling 1.2 billion dollars short of budgeted revenues for the current school year. This equates to a loss of seven million dollars in state funding for Forest Hills Public Schools. This would constitute the largest K-12 funding cut in the modern history of Michigan's K-12 funding system. Thankfully, we have built up our financial reserves over the past few years. These reserves can blunt some of the impact of these cuts. Additionally, much-needed financial support may come in the months ahead from the federal government to all 50 states.

Finally, we are grateful for the support of our own community and from you through the generous support of the Foundation. So, we are in a time of challenge that requires us to adapt, to focus, to innovate, to lean in and to come together like never before. We possess all of the ingredients and more to meet these challenges. Our teachers are amazing professionals who love our kids as their own. They know our kids and they can quickly make up any ground lost during this time of home quarantine. Our support staff and administrators are selfless servants with hearts and minds focused squarely on meeting the needs of all of our communities' children. Our parents, families, and community members are a deep source of talent, ingenuity, collective support, and encouragement.

Yes, your financial support, if able, is appreciated now, perhaps more than ever. However, more important than money, is our collective belief that we can come together, encourage and support one another, overcome these challenges, and realize new opportunities for our kids and their future that constitutes our strongest asset.

As I close, let me simply say, “thank you.” Thank you for your support of the Forest Hills Public Schools Foundation. Thank you for support of our community and the schools that belong to all of us. Thank you for your support of the selfless servants preparing those 150,000 meals and the teachers who are adapting in record time to meet the needs of 10,000 kids.

Our history shows us, that when we come together, there is no challenge too big or no gift too small in our quest to see to it that all children have what they need to find, follow, and achieve their dreams. On behalf of all the staff members of the Forest Hills Public Schools, thank you for your generosity and your continued support.

Thanks Dan. Thanks for sharing with us today. As both a parent in the district and a representative of the Foundation, I know that we have great community support for the educators across the district in great times, in uncertain times, in all times. And through our Foundation events, we have an opportunity to show that support. The mission of the Forest Hills Public Schools Foundation is to provide funding for all areas of academic excellence in Forest Hills Public Schools.

We distribute over 300,000 dollars annually to benefit our fabulous educators and students. These funds come from our three largest fundraisers held throughout the year: the State of the District Luncheon, which we had to cancel, our golf outing, which is rescheduled for September 22nd, and our Gala in November. Despite the pause in our world, and even the academic calendar this spring, these funds will still be needed during the upcoming school year, and we are even anticipating an increase in requests. Therefore, it is more important than ever that we continue to fundraise and give our

community the opportunity to do something important and meaningful in this uncertain time.

Thank you for joining us today and thank you for considering a gift.

Now, I'd like to introduce Chuck Cox, chairperson of the Foundation.

Hello, thanks for joining us today. While the coronavirus pandemic forced us to cancel the State of the District luncheon, I am still grateful for this opportunity to speak to you. On behalf of the Foundation, I invite you to join us in supporting educators and students throughout the district. We have never done this type of event before, but others have, and successfully. This event is an opportunity for the entire Forest Hills community to come together to support the students and the teachers of the district. We have are the opportunity to raise more funds than ever before to ensure that we can meet the needs of our individual teacher grants during the 2020-2021 school year. We can do this through increased participation with gifts of every size.

We understand that these are uncertain times. Some supporters might not be able to give this year. Others may need to reduce their annual contribution. Still others may see the gap and have the inclination to make a more significant gift because they can when others cannot. All these things are possible. We ask everyone to do what they can. We even have an opportunity to make a pledge now and pay it later when cash flow may be more certain.

Here's how you can make a difference. You can use your phone. Text FHPS to 2 4 3 7 2 5. You can visit our web site at www.fhpsf.org and click on the tab, or you can mail a check to the Foundation office at 600 Forest Hill Avenue.

Please note, that in addition to the traditional giving operations there are a few other opportunities as well. You can pledge now and we can invoice you in September, or you can choose a monthly giving option. All of these giving opportunities are outlined in the attachment of the email you received and they can be found on our website. Simply “click” the State of the District event page that can be found on our homepage. Together, we can all make a difference. Thank you for your consideration and stay well.