



May 16, 2024

Dear Hiawatha Community,

We wanted to update you regarding efforts by the district, Hiawatha community, and local officials to increase safety around the entrance to Hiawatha Elementary.

While the district remains focused on a safe school drop off and pick up at Hiawatha, the decision how – or if – to build a second entrance to the school will be on hold for at least two years (no sooner than 2026-27) so the district can assess effectiveness of other interventions and the status of the bond program before moving forward.

Part of the rationale for pausing the new car line design process is that the only viable option at this time for a second Hiawatha school entrance is a bus-only entrance off of Fairhills Drive. The Ingham County Road Department determined that a second entrance at Summergate Lane or Jolly Road would not meet their approval.

Instead, the district will be implementing improved drop off procedures for our youngest students, working with the ICRD on a school zone designation on Jolly Road (to reduce the speed limit by the school), and adding “No Parking” signs on Summergate Lane approved by the Meridian Township Board earlier this year. We hope these measures ease congestion and improve safe navigation for our bus drivers and parents.

In summary – the district is working on other options to address the safety concerns and will reassess in a few years. When meeting with a committee representing Hiawatha-area residents last week, we shared that the district will reach back out to them to keep the process transparent. Any community members who wish to stay directly informed of district updates are strongly encouraged to sign up for our free [community information](#) listserv and to check our [website](#) on a regular basis.

Construction planned for this summer at Hiawatha will add a new secured vestibule at the front entrance. Hiawatha’s aging playground will be updated in the summer of 2025.

The district appreciates the community’s input, patience, and support as well as the efforts from our local officials as we navigate this process with the shared goal of prioritizing the health and safety of our students.

John J. Hood
Superintendent