

August 2022



LEARNING & SUCCESS FOR ALL

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS & DELAYS:

Be sure to update your contact information in Infinite Campus to receive weather-related school phone messages and texts. If we start late on a Wednesday, we **WILL NOT** dismiss one hour early.

HUMBOLDT Community School District

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
23 3rd St. N.,
Dakota City, IA 50529

515-332-1330



www.humboldt.k12.ia.us



@OfficialHCSD



@humboldt_csd

Message from Superintendent Jim Murray



WELCOME BACK!

I am very excited to welcome our students to Humboldt Community School District! Our district administrators and teacher leaders have developed a strategic plan to improve instruction, intervention, and classroom environment. I am very proud of the high standards set by our stakeholders and school board. The input we receive guides us as we strive for excellence in all areas. There is no room for complacency. This new school year is no exception, as there is much to be excited about regarding our district's continuous improvement initiatives.

As always, please approach me anytime to share input for bettering our school district. It continues to be my privilege to serve you as Superintendent.

Sincerely,
Jim Murray, Superintendent

The Humboldt School Board Members recently approved the district's goals and priorities for this school year.

- Provide a safe, nurturing, and drug-free environment for all.
- Educational excellence and equity for every student.
- Strengthen communication and stakeholder partnerships.
- Fiscal responsibility

For each issue, I will share strategic initiatives for meeting those goals, and I'll begin with our highest priority: Provide a safe, nurturing, and drug-free environment for all.

- Staff will continue receiving professional development from the Trauma Informed Online Academy to have the skills to identify and meet the needs of students struggling social-emotionally.
- We are forming a committee of stakeholders, including law enforcement, to examine and improve our facilities and procedures. Trained experts will review each building's safety and security measures in place. We plan to schedule a vulnerability assessment with the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management team.
- We are working with architects to design a secure front office entrance to the high school. We are hopeful plans can be completed by midyear, and construction will begin next summer.
- We will continuously bring the drug dogs into high and middle school.
- We installed vape detectors in almost all middle and high school bathrooms.
- The high school installed alarms on the exterior doors.
- We installed panic buttons in all building offices that contact law enforcement in an emergency.
- We implement Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, PBIS, in kindergarten through eighth grade, which provides consistency in expectations and a common language for all.
- Mental health professionals provide services for individuals in our schools thanks to the support from Humboldt County Memorial Hospital.

"THE REAL DEAL"

I continue to get great feedback from this portion of the newsletter. Our community members don't want to hear that everything is well, as they know education is a challenging profession.

- Last year we had a handful of seniors who did not graduate high school. Attendance issues, substance abuse, learning disabilities, and mental health remain our primary obstacles. As early as preschool, we identify a small group of students with the highest risk of not graduating. We work to build relationships with families and proactively put interventions in place.
- **Help Wanted!** We need custodians, food service workers, and teacher associates.
- One of our district priorities is fiscal responsibility. The current condition of the economy will challenge our finances. I'm greatly concerned about supply chain issues and fuel costs.
- We have a small group of students in the district who display bold behavioral issues such as eloping, noncompliance, physical aggression, shutdowns, and anger management.

Moving the Multipurpose Building: New Athletic Training Complex Construction Begins

WHY A NEW FACILITY?

Student weight room and wrestling participation numbers are bursting, and athletes need more space. The current practice gym floor needs to be replaced. We explored putting an addition on and updating the existing Multipurpose Building. That expense and bringing it up to all fire and construction codes made our facility committee decide to move toward a new structure.

WHERE WILL THE NEW FACILITY BE LOCATED?

We are locating it right where the current steel Multipurpose Building is. Unlike the existing building, the new training facility will connect to the high school.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE CURRENT MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING?

The current building is a fantastic donation by the Athletic Boosters over twenty years ago. We plan to move the building to the northwest side of the practice field. It will be useful. With the demolition of the old middle school, we'll need the storage space. Thank you to our past Athletic Boosters and current ones for the outstanding support we receive.



WHAT WILL WE DO DURING CONSTRUCTION WITHOUT THE SPACE?

The Humboldt Recreation Center has been gracious about allowing us to use their space as a temporary solution. We are exploring lots of options. We will be creative with the basketball practice schedules. Youth basketball teams may notice less gym availability for next year.

HOW DOES THIS FIT INTO OUR FACILITIES PLAN?

The district has a facilities plan that prioritizes additional classroom space with a gym at Taft Elementary, more classroom space at the Humboldt Middle School, and a front, secure office entry space to the Humboldt High School. We are adding additional restrooms to the athletic complex near the concession stand and football field. We hope to complete those designs in November and begin the construction bid process. Our hope is for construction starting the spring and summer of 2023.

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Paul Numedahl High School Principal

Hello Wildcat Nation! Welcome to the 22-23 school year. We had a busy summer here at the high school with new ceiling fans, wax on the floors, fresh paint, and construction crews getting ready to start on the new athletic addition. A big thank you to our custodial and maintenance staff for getting the building in tip-top shape and ready for the new school year. That we are an organization of and for learning. What this means is that we are committed to meaningful learning for all students.

This year, part of our professional learning will focus on how to effectively use data within the context of grade level team meetings to improve student learning. These data analysis meetings focus on the use of student-related academic data to inform instructional decisions, next steps, and teaching actions. Data sets include but are not limited to course grades and attendance. Grade level team meetings will occur once per month during our Wednesday early release days. The ultimate purpose of these team meetings is to provide intervention and/or enrichment activities to support effective and meaningful instruction.

Although I will miss the long summer days, I celebrate the start of school with all the hope and promise a new year offers. We do have an extraordinary student body, school staff, and community. It's great to be a Wildcat!



Cassie Smith Middle School Principal

Hello Humboldt Wildcat Family! I'm super excited to introduce myself, Cassie Smith, as the new Middle School Principal! I am excited for this opportunity to jump in and get started with the amazing staff, students and parents at Humboldt Middle School. Personally, I love learning and will continue to grow in this new role. My commitment to you is that I will continue to ask questions, gain knowledge, and grow through my professional development and mentoring to best serve the needs of our students, parents, staff, and community.

As a Middle School staff, we will continue to grow and expand our professional learning throughout the school year. While we strive to improve our instruction in the classrooms for students, we are also working on providing support for the social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs we know will arise. The key areas of growth for the Middle School include providing support for all students by focusing on:

- Positive Behaviors Interventions & Supports (PBIS)
- Trauma-Informed Online Academy (TIQA)
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Tier 1 Instruction - Essential Standards

My goal this year is to provide clear communication and positive collaboration with all stakeholders, including members of the Wildcat community. It is important that people in the community know what is happening in our buildings, including things we are doing well and things we are working to improve. The biggest challenge I foresee is getting up to speed with the specific inter-workings of the middle school, but with the help and support (and a little grace) of our staff, administration, and community, I know I will be able to overcome the challenge and emerge a stronger leader. My door is open. I welcome your input on how we can better the middle school.



Mark Wenzel Twin Rivers Elementary Principal

Hello Twin Rivers and Humboldt Families! Another summer has passed and we are at that time of year again. I have to say that while I am always sad to see summer end, I am always super excited to see what the new year has in store for us. At the school we have had a bunch of projects going on. The AC/Heating unit is still being installed to give a greater level of comfort for each classroom. An office bathroom and teachers' lounge was also updated as well. One of the projects I am most excited about is the construction of the shelter house out by the playground. This will give students a place to escape the sun on those super hot days as well as provide some wind break on those windy days.

The part I'm most excited is getting to see your children's faces and hear about their summer adventures. We will be starting school in just a few weeks and the excitement they have over the excitement they have to see how everyone is doing. The staff at Twin Rivers really do love that we follow a family philosophy. Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year! If you need anything or have any questions at all, please feel free to contact me at mwenzel@tr.k12.ia.us or 815-578-1309.

Lora Kester Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Mease Elementary Principal

Welcome back to a new school year! We are excited to have students and teachers back in the building after a summer of updates. Mease will have new cabinetry and some new furniture. Five rooms have a fresh coat of paint. We are also all celebrating the new mini-split air conditioners! It feels like a brand new building.

Safety remains one of our top priorities. We will be working closely with local law enforcement to update our safety plans. As the year progresses, you will begin to see a few changes. We ask that all visitors check into the office first. As in the past, outside doors will remain locked at all times. Our building goals include academic and social-emotional learning. This year, we will be learning more about purposeful play. We have added an additional recess and a scheduled time each day in the classroom to teach through play. Students will learn how to make choices, how to be a good friend, and how to regulate their emotions. We are also committed to direct instruction in behavior using Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS). PBIS gives us a framework to identify and support desired behaviors in the school setting through the encouragement of positive behaviors. This leads to a positive school climate that includes a feeling of safety, respect, engagement in learning, involvement in school life, shared vision, and involvement of teachers, students, and families.

One challenge, district-wide, continues to be finding substitute teachers. We can't avoid illness and occasionally we have professional learning needs that call for a teacher to be gone during the day. If you, or someone you know, would enjoy spending time with our preschool and kindergarten students, reach out to Michelle Thomas in the district office. We look forward to a fantastic year!



Ryan Fedders Taft Elementary Principal

Welcome back to the 22-23 school year. Wildcat families! The staff at Taft are excited to have students returning in the coming days. Our building leadership team was hard at work throughout May/June on our building goals for the upcoming school year. Our focus will be to build upon the hard work that our staff began last year in regards to our reading curriculum implementation and small group support for students. Now that staff knows what is contained within the curriculum, instructional decisions around best teaching practices/priority standards can be made as teams continue to collaborate in PLCs. We will also look to begin some of that same work in math by identifying priority standards and providing interventions for students that need additional support. Finally, our staff will engage in professional development this year to ensure our PBIS framework (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) and TIQA (Trauma Informed Online Academy) work from last year are aligned to provide students with the social-emotional support needed.

We look forward to partnering with our families to provide the best educational experiences that we can for students. The biggest thing that our families can do to support our work at Taft is to continue to openly communicate with our teachers myself about any concerns that they may have. When we work together and maintain open lines of communication, we can be inspired and aligned in our approach to serving our students and their individual needs.

Taft will look quite different at the beginning of this school year. We are excited to utilize the new playground that will be built at the end of August and we will also have three new classrooms in our 3rd and 4th-grade hallway that includes a library, library, counter, and paint I'm looking forward to a great school year together! Please contact me at rfedders@humboldt.k12.ia.us or 515-332-3316 with any questions or concerns that you may have.



New teaching staff in the Humboldt and Twin Rivers School Districts, front row (L-R): Susan Blanchard, Kelsey Smith, Carolyn Powers, Kate Orreus and Angela Duffy. Back row: Jordan Bush, Emma Schmitt, Madison Smith, Benjamin, Chavers, Stephanie Heinz and Taylor Smith.

Abby Horbach Director of Safety and Mental Health & High School Assistant Principal

Hello, Wildcat family! I hope you all had a wonderful, relaxing summer! I am excited to start my third year at Humboldt High School. I am trying to work to undo the connections I am making with staff, students, families, and the community. This school year, I will be focusing on our top priorities for the school year. I will be working with the community to ensure our students are safe and supported. I will be working with the staff to ensure our students are safe and supported. I will be working with the staff to ensure our students are safe and supported.

The goal is to always be proactive in our efforts to react to in our responses. We want to be prepared for everything to best support staff, students, and their families in the best way possible.

We have partnered with our local Law Enforcement Center to participate in another, active shooter, professional development. Deputy Lampro and Chief Sanders have also gone through buildings and have given feedback and suggestions on ways to better improve safety in our schools which is our number one priority.

This summer, Governor Reynolds announced that all districts will receive \$30,000 per school building to implement recommended safety measures from vulnerability risk assessments that the state will be providing. We are waiting on more guidance from the state on this process to move forward with necessary measures. In September, Mr. Murray, Susan Ruiz (School Resource Officer), and I will be attending a workshop, *Safe and Secure Schools - Empower Staff to Help and Respond Effectively in an Emergency*. This workshop provides innovative, low-cost strategies to help schools create a safer learning environment while understanding the research and empowering staff. More details to come!

Finally, the drug dogs will be making their appearances throughout the year. Again, these will be random 4-5 times where the dogs may show up to search hallways, lockers, parking lots, etc. in any of the buildings. A safe and a drug free school is always our number one priority! We are looking forward to a great 2022-2023 school year! GO CATS!

SAFE SCHOOL HOTLINE

The Safe School Helpline® has been mentioned in previous articles which is an anonymous reporting system designed to assist in reporting any wrongdoing such as threats of violence, suicide, theft, harassment, weapons, drugs/alcohol, etc. that impacts our schools, our students or our staff - anonymously, so as to protect your privacy. There are multiple ways to make an anonymous report. These include:

- Call 1-800-4-1-VOICE, ext. 359 (418-6423)
- Text 614-426-0240 then type TIPS.
- Safe School Helpline® mobile app on an Android or Apple phone
- www.safeschoolhelpline.com.

The Safe School Helpline® team will transcribe and send your message to necessary school officials and/or the IEC, so appropriate action(s) can be taken. For more information, please refer to the school website or contact your student's building administrator.

Creighton Jenness Director of Special Education & Middle School Assistant Principal

It's that time of year again! I know that the end of summer and the beginning of the school year can be a time of excitement or disappointment, but this year I'm hoping that everyone will be excited about getting back to school. The Middle School has had some significant changes this summer, and we're excited to get all the students back and acclimated. We are implementing PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports), a more robust MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports), and a better focus on our PLC (Professional Learning Communities) work.

Understanding of them by the time this year is over. In essence, all three of these things are looking at how to better select, serve and support students. We are improving the procedures for our students and staff that are very systematic and predictable so that all students get the assistance they need.

On the Special Education side of my job, we have many challenges facing us this year. The state of Iowa is starting a new system for our IEPs (Individual Education Plans) called Achieve. The staff's learning curve will be steep. We also have our DSDP (Special Education: District Developed Service Delivery Plan) to re-evaluate. Our plan comes at the right time for us, as we have been working to improve the consistency of our special education services. We will start developing this DSDP plan soon.

