

Message from Superintendent Jim Murray



Spring is upon us as we have completed $\frac{3}{4}$ of this historic school year. This time of year is hectic as our administrators and teacher leaders are working on planning for next year and finishing this school year at the same time.

School staff received their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccination on March 19. Students not wearing a mask still need to be quarantined when exposed. There isn't much time left in the school year. We don't want healthy students quarantined and missing the precious days of instruction left and school activities, including Prom and Graduation. We will likely finish the year in masks.

I participate in several community organizations that have hosted take-out dinner fundraisers and am in awe of the community support. The parent support for our school efforts this year has been outstanding. It continues to be my privilege to serve as Superintendent of Schools.

"THE REAL DEAL"

I heard the same message throughout my interviews with community members in June and July. They don't want to hear that everything is well as they know education is a challenging profession.

- I met with several community individuals concerned with drugs, alcohol, and vaping at the school. Our data tells our administrative team that the issue is not as significant as publicly perceived to all students, but it is still present at school with many. I believe our sheriff's department is currently training new drug dogs. We are hopeful to use them at the middle and high school this year. Our administrative team is not to have any advance notice. The high school administration is adding door alarms on the outside exits to supervise students better. They are also researching vape detectors for the bathrooms. Most importantly, all of us recognize that relationships and education are the most critical interventions.
- Administrators are currently hiring staff for next year. We need talented special education teachers, and they are tough to find. We are celebrating that we hired a new Industrial Technology Teacher. The district had gone without a full-time Industrial Technology teacher for the past three years.
- The COVID-19 funding received has been beneficial. It is challenging to prioritize using that funding to go to areas most in need.



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

Ryan Fedders Taft Elementary Principal

We were happy to get back into our routines at Taft over the month of March; January and February proved to be a challenge in consistency with all of the late starts/incllement weather. Our staff and students have enjoyed getting out into the fresh air for recesses, along with gaining some playground equipment back that was stuck on the roof this winter!

Our playground committee met again at the end of March. We spent a majority of our time looking at the parent and student survey data, which was sent on to the playground companies to incorporate into their initial drawings. Thanks for all that took time to fill this survey out! We also spent some time organizing into sub committees that will dig into a specific area of the playground - swings, slides, surfacing, obstacles course, etc - once our initial drawings come in. This will allow us to ensure that all aspects of the playground meet our expectations!

Students continue to work hard at following our building-wide PBIS expectations. Our second goal was to earn 2,600 CAT cards, which was met in early March. Students spent time participating in an event called Board Game Bonanza, where they had the opportunity to play a few different board games during a portion of the day. Many students - and staff - enjoyed the change from video games and other technology!

We're already beginning to plan for next year at Taft. We will continue to add sections, which is great! Our spaces may have to be utilized differently again next year as some of our specials classrooms will likely need to be used as classrooms for our grade level sections. This year, we had six sections of 1st grade, four sections of 2nd grade, five sections of 3rd grade, and four sections of 4th grade. Next year, we will plan for five sections of 1st grade, six sections of 2nd grade, four sections of 3rd grade, and five sections of 4th grade, which is an overall increase of one section at Taft.

Planning for next year has brought up a few challenges. One of the first ones is the need to hire new teachers. With the increase in sections, along with teachers taking on leadership roles within the district or opportunities outside of the district, we have the need to hire two 2nd grade teachers along with a 4th grade teacher. We have great shared leadership and experience at Taft, so I'm looking forward to working through the interview process with our staff!

Another challenge that we've looked at as a district is the need to realign some of our resources to better serve our special education students. Some of this work has already begun this school year. We've specifically looked at associate schedules and student needs to make sure that we are maximizing these resources to the best of our ability. The other piece that we have looked at is hiring an additional Level II special education teacher to better serve our students that have learning and/or behavior challenges. This position was hired in early March.

We continue to be grateful that we remain at school in-person. We are seeing many academic and social gains in our students; thanks for your help in making this happen! As always, please contact me at rfedders@humboldt.k12.ia.us or call at 515-332-3216 with any questions or concerns you may have!



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

It is finally starting to feel like spring, and we are quickly approaching the end of the school year. Crazy how time has flown!

As always, our focus is still on safety and mental health. The door alarms are currently being installed throughout the high school. These will alert staff if someone leaves or opens a side door. This will help us monitor the two main entrances better to ensure safety.

All cameras are up and working. We were waiting on the fiber for two of the parking lot ones, but it was too cold to do it. I also had a tv installed in my office with the cameras up throughout the day to help eliminate issues and be proactive. The drug dogs are ready to roll and will be making sweeps in the near future.

We also will be rolling out an anonymous reporting system called Safe Schools Helpline. The 24/7 Safe School Helpline service is a service that allows our school community to anonymously report wrongdoing via web, text or phone. There is also a mobile application for Apple and Android phones and tablets.

The company monitors reports 24/7, transcribes, evaluates and translates and sends the verbatim reports back to our district. They transcribe the tips as they come in and follow up immediately in emergency situations. They ask investigative questions to the tip provider to get the who, what, where, when of a situation. The reports are sent to the district based on our directives (principal, counselor, law enforcement, etc.)

They also have 24/7 mental health crisis counselors to help troubled students who are suicidal, bullied, or simply having a tough time. Importantly, the members of the counseling staff meet the two major suicide counseling qualifications QPR <https://qprinstitute.com/research-theory> and ASIST Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) is an intensive, interactive, and practice-dominated course designed to help caregivers recognize and review risk, and intervene to prevent the immediate risk of suicide. It is by far the most widely used, acclaimed, and researched suicide intervention training workshop in the world. Our counseling organization itself is also CARF accredited which is the Commission on Accreditation for Rehabilitation Facilities. <http://www.carf.org/Accreditation/> Look for more information to come on this.

A positive, safe, drug-free school environment is crucial to students' healthy academic and social-emotional development. Our goal is to always be proactive in our efforts as opposed to reactive in our responses. We are looking forward to a great end of the 2020-2021 school year. GO CATS!



Paul Numedahl High School Principal



Hello Wildcat Nation! Third quarter has come and gone and it's hard to believe our year is winding down. The final quarter of the school year is typically busy with academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities and events. Two noteworthy spring events that are coming soon include prom and graduation. Due to student and staff diligence and perseverance with our mitigation strategies and mask wearing, I feel confident that we can effectively minimize the risk of COVID exposure to enjoy both of these activities in-person.

Additional news to share includes our recent hire of a new Industrial Tech/Arts teacher. Joel Hanus hails from Webster City and is a recent UNI graduate. By all accounts, Joel is a dynamic and relational teacher. We are pleased and excited to have him aboard. Other news on the staffing front includes our search for a new high school band director. We are currently in the process of forming our interview team and schedule. Look for more information concerning this position in the future.

Over the past few weeks, students have been engaged in the process of selecting coursework for next year. If you have not done so, I strongly encourage parents/guardians to talk with your students about the courses they selected for next year. Humboldt High School offers a wide variety of course opportunities including dual credit coursework where students earn college credit here at Humboldt High School. We also offer career pathway programs in the areas of Manufacturing Technology, Engineering Technology, Computer Science, Business, or Education at the North Central Career Academy Campus (Eagle Grove). These career pathways are part of a program partnership with other area school districts and Iowa Central Community College.

In closing, it has been my absolute pleasure to serve the Humboldt School Community during this atypical and unique school year. The commitment to education and to one another is truly awesome and a testament to the supportive and community minded nature of the people who live here. We are Wildcats!

Mark Wenzel

Twin Rivers Elementary Principal

Hello Twin Rivers Elementary and Humboldt Community!

As the weather transitions to spring, I think everyone is ready to be outside. At Twin Rivers, the K-5 students had the opportunity to visit the Water's Edge Nature Center in Algona. There



were a variety of learning opportunities for each grade level including a nature scavenger hunt, winter habitats, animal survival and ice fishing. The students really enjoyed their time outside as well as the field trip which has been missing from our hands-on learning experiences since COVID-19.

Another exciting activity at TR was a visit from Terrence Talley. He has visited the Humboldt Community Schools in the past and this year he was able to visit

Twin Rivers. Terrence led an assembly that focused on the social emotional needs of our students. He delivered a message of hope and provided inspiration and encouragement for students. It was nice to have someone come in and reiterate the messages also being delivered at school.

The students at TR have completed the MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) assessments to check for student growth as we move through the year. Teachers are accessing the data to help improve the delivery of curriculum and change or implement targeted interventions. In early April the students will also participate in the ISASP (Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress). These tests are intended to show where students are in relationship to learning outcome goals that align with the Iowa Core Standards.

The teachers and teacher associates have completed CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention) Training. This training focuses on learning de-escalation techniques. It teaches professionals how to approach differing situations in ways that support the dignity of the individual in distress. It provides tools and strategies to support and move the specific situation into a situation of positive resolve.

Thank you to everyone for the support as we get closer to the end of the school year. It has been a team effort in the many lessons we have learned and continue to learn moving forward. We appreciate the efforts of the students, families, school board, staff and community for moving through this school year with patience and support.

Brenda Geitzenauer

Middle School Principal

Humboldt Middle School is in the 4th quarter of the school year! It has been a year for change, adjustments, and growth for everyone. During this last quarter the statewide assessments, ISASP's, will be given to students. Teachers are working on adding more rigor and writing skills to their lessons. Students are asked to write responses on every test including math.

Some other exciting things that will happen this year is the ability to have a parade of bands, parade of choirs, and also the 5th grade Operetta. Last year all of these things were cancelled so it may be the first time your student has been able to participate in these wonderful events.

Humboldt Middle School wants to continue to encourage parents to contact the school with questions and concerns. Any information can help us work closer with your child and help him or her be successful. Remember that as the weather gets nicer, hopefully students will be able to work in time to get outside in the fresh air and to exercise each day. Exercise is important for both physical and mental health.

Middle school age students are not ones to talk much, but it's normal for him/her to become busier and more private as he/she gets older. Remember to take time to ask questions that require more than a yes or no answer. Some examples would include: What was the best part of your day today? What do you think about the new teacher you have this year? What is one thing you would change about school if you could?



Lora Kester

Mease Elementary Principal

Mease Elementary has been hopping with activity this spring! We had 52 children attend Preschool Roundup on March 1st. Our theme was "Preschool is Pawsitively the Best". Students received a book donated by our local PATHS (Parents and Teachers for Humboldt Students) group. We organized small groups of parents

and children to allow for social distancing. The children enjoyed educational centers while the parents met to learn more about preschool at Mease. There is no cost to attend Preschool at Mease. Classes meet Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. We offer both morning and afternoon sessions. Our classes are kept small and are taught by highly qualified teachers and staff. We are still accepting pre registrations so if you missed our Roundup, give Michelle Thomas a call at (515) 332-3578 for more information.

Kindergarten Roundup was held on March 12th. We had 91 students participate in either a morning session or an afternoon session. Each student also received a book from PATHS. The children met the Kindergarten teachers and enjoyed a series of activities to introduce them to Mease Elementary. If you have a 2021-22 Kindergarten student, and they were unable to attend, we can schedule a private tour and introduction to Mease. Call us at 332-3578 to schedule an appointment.

We recently learned that our Mease Preschool program received a Foundation grant of \$7500.00! The district will match this amount and we are looking forward to equipping a playground dedicated to preschool students!

In addition to our playground expansion, we will be replacing student lockers this summer. This is great news that comes with some challenges. We will be exploring storage options as there just doesn't seem to be enough. It is taking some creative thinking but we are excited to have new lockers and maybe even some new painted hallways!



Creighton Jenness

Director of Special Education & Middle School Assistant Principal

This year has been extremely tough on all of us. In my conversations with colleagues from across the state, they have seen an uptick of behaviors, along with mental health concerns coming to the forefront of their desks. The state department is aware of this, and has already passed Senate File 2360: Guidance for safe classroom environments (SF2360) to try and help with these growing concerns. One of the components of SF2360 is a grant opportunity to have a "therapeutic classroom." Although many of the details are yet to be finalized, we have already developed a team of individuals from across the district to help gather information, and then eventually write this grant. This space is intended to be for students who are struggling with Social / Emotional components in their life and needing a place to be at for a different learning environment, while they are dysregulated.

The goal of this therapeutic classroom / space will be helping students to re-regulate, and continue with their learning journey. The learning in this classroom, or classroom spaces, will look different and will have ways for students to help with their social-emotional needs.

If we are not able to receive this grant from the state, there are also various items that we would be able to have direct reimbursement to help with this. Our goal will be to have therapeutic resources for students that need them, along with providing the teachers some tools that they can use to give our students the assistance they need.

2021-2022 SCHOOL CALENDAR



The board approved next year's school calendar during the March meeting. We were pleased to receive over 300 parent responses to our calendar survey. We utilized the feedback we received from staff and parents to make a few adjustments for next year.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE:

The feedback we received from parents split between full days only and one-hour early outs. A lot of comments were about needing consistency. Staff preferred the one-hour early releases. As a result, we will continue with the one-hour early releases next year.

SPRING/HOLIDAY BREAKS:

We received a lot of feedback regarding adding a spring break and lengthening the holiday vacations. Notice, we extended the Thanksgiving, winter, and Easter breaks for students. Overwhelmingly, everyone wants to end the school year before Memorial Day. Adding a spring break would make that very challenging.

SNOW DAYS:

We have built extra hours into the calendar to provide snow day makeup options. We may not make up every student day. We can also add some to the end of the year and still finish by Memorial Day. Virtual days are also an option if approved by the state.

ENDING THE SEMESTER BEFORE THE WINTER BREAK:

Staff and families overwhelmingly would like to see the semester end before the winter break in December. Since we cannot start the year any sooner than August 23, completing the semester before January would create a discrepancy between the number of days for each semester. Students and teachers would have less time to cover necessary material. Adding a January or May term is a high-order change and would require more research.

We posted the **2021-2022 Calendar** on the district's website at **humboldt.k12.ia.us**

Thank you all for your input and support. It is challenging to please all. I will solicit input from all stakeholders again next year during calendar development.

