



**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



Whew! It is not yet time to put "Looks Like We Made It," a song by Barry Manilow, on the playlist, but it appears the winter is close to ending. So far, the weather has led us to six combined early-outs and late starts. We had six snow days. Those add up to 51 hours of instruction. Making weather-related decisions is by far the most challenging part of my job. Our last school day was to be Wednesday, May 24. Students must receive 1080 hours of instruction each school year. We build the school calendar, anticipating weather-related issues, so there are about 40 hours extra. Administrators are developing and will present a plan for student and staff makeup days to the school board for approval. Of course, we aren't entirely out of the woods regarding weather-related issues, so those could be best-laid plans.

We had great parent-teacher conference participation last month. I am proud and thankful for the staff's preparation efforts during conferences. Thank you to all parents who attended and partnered with us to provide an excellent educational experience for all students.

Our School Improvement Advisory Committee, SIAC, met last week. I appreciated the stakeholder recommendations for improvement from parents, community leaders, high school students, and staff. All had an opportunity to provide input for bettering our district. Some common themes:

- Maximize opportunities for students to move and be active during the school day.
- Meeting all students' mental health needs.
- Recognize the demands beyond the school day that our secondary students experience.
- Modernizing our high school classrooms and the auditorium, including flexible seating and a welcoming atmosphere.
- Consider early childhood flexibility, including Alternative Kindergarten.
- Increasing career pathways and explorer classes for high school students.
- Meeting the mental health and work environment needs of staff.
- Partnering with area businesses for career readiness opportunities.
- Marketing the district.
- More consistency in the food offerings and portions during lunch while reducing food waste.

As always, please approach me anytime with questions or suggestions for improving our school district. It continues to be my pleasure to serve you.

"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.

- It is a time of year when most administrators are busy with staffing. One issue all schools are having is that the candidate pools are shrinking. It is common now that almost all position pools have less than twenty candidates. We have a handful of candidates to choose from for most of our positions, and principals must act quickly. Fortunately, the candidates we are receiving are of high quality.
- The health insurance increase for Humboldt Community Schools was 9.63%, which is approximately \$200,000. Negotiations have begun for wage increases for staff. We want wages that attract and retain our talented staff members yet make fiscally responsible decisions for the school district's future. I am incredibly grateful to the team of teachers and our school board members for their willingness to work collaboratively through these financial challenges.



Ryan Fedders Taft Elementary Principal

Hello, Wildcat families! The end of March is already upon us, which means that planning and preparing for next school year is in full swing. We are excited to continue to update our facilities in the building and have a busy summer of construction ahead. At Taft, we will remove and install new cabinetry and counters in six classrooms to continue the work that started last summer. We are also planning to replace our hallway lighting and paint some outdated tiles (ceiling and wall,) along with updating some classroom furniture throughout the building. Finally, we plan to update the sinks/flooring in our 1st/2nd-grade restrooms - it will be a nice change to not have to manually "unstick" the lever in our boys' restroom multiple times per day!

We are also in the process of hiring some new staff. Due to an additional section in our building, along with a few teachers leaving Taft, we are hiring for three classroom positions. We hope to have these filled by the end of March to be ahead of the game in our hiring process. Candidate pools continue to shrink each year, but we have some quality candidates interested in joining us in Humboldt.

As mentioned above, we are adding an extra section to our building next year as four 4th-grade sections will be leaving our building while five 1st-grade sections will be joining. We are already tight in the building with STEM having to be taught in classrooms and Music/PE across the street. Our leadership team will be working to brainstorm solutions to this issue as this school year comes to a close; we appreciate that our teachers continue to be flexible with spaces to serve student needs. The new addition to Taft will be an exciting solution to this space issue sometime in the 2nd half of next school year!

As always, please contact me at rfedders@humboldt.k12.ia.us or 515-332-3216 with any questions or concerns that you may have.





Lora Kester
Director of Curriculum & Instruction,
Mease Elementary Principal

It is hard to believe that we are nearing the end of the 2022-23 school year. We have much to celebrate! This year we learned about and began implementing Purposeful Play at Mease. We are using play to learn more about how to share, collaborate with our friends, and understand emotions in ourselves and others. We will continue to focus on this work next year.

We are celebrating our elementary winter assessment data. We had a high number of students scoring at the proficient level and overall student growth was tremendous. Mease students were 85% proficient in literacy and 83% proficient in math. We are in the second year of a new literacy curriculum and next year we will have a new math curriculum. The teachers work hard to give students exactly what they need and students are making great progress!

It has been fun to watch the preschool and kindergarten students grow throughout the year. We continue to celebrate positive behaviors. I regularly see students in my office to celebrate making responsible choices or for helping others. It is fun to celebrate with special activities like "Pizza with the Principal" and other school wide celebrations. We are proud of all of our students.

Next year we will continue to stay focused. Soon we will be developing elementary level goals that tie to district goals. We don't need to add new and different things to meet our goals. We do want to continue to learn more about effective instructional practices that meet the needs of our students. We will align professional development to our goals.

If you have a child who is preschool or kindergarten age, or know of someone who does, we are still taking registrations for those classes. We have so much to offer at Mease including:

- Small Classroom Sizes
- Three recesses/play opportunities throughout the school day
- Social-Emotional Resources, Instruction, and Support
- High Quality Literacy and Math Curriculum
- 1:1 i-Pads
- Targeted Literacy and Social-emotional intervention in small groups
- Literacy Rich Environment
- Willingness to personalize the experience to the developmental level of the student, enrollment options (1/2 day or Full day)
- Highly Qualified Classroom and Encore Teachers (art, music, PE, STEM)

Sign up or share the information below. It is our privilege to have the opportunity to be a part of your child's first school experience!

Register for Kindergarten Round-Up at: <https://bit.ly/Kroundup2023-24> or call Lacey Casady at (515)332-3578. Current Preschool students are already registered.



Paul Numedahl
High School Principal

Hello Wildcat Families! Once again, I hope this message finds you well and warm. As I write this the weather took a cold turn and is just above freezing for the day's high. Hopefully, this is the final cold spell before warmer spring temperatures settle in.

The winter activity and athletic season have given way to the spring season. Hard to believe that prom is only a few short weeks away. Spring is always an interesting transition time for schools. We are still running full steam in the current school year,

but preparing for the upcoming school year starting in August. Part of the preparations include academic planning for the next school year.

Very soon 9th, 10th and 11th grade students will be registering for courses for the 23-24 academic year. In order to graduate from Humboldt High School, students need 8 credits in English, 6 in mathematics, 6 in science, 6 in social studies, 18 elective courses, and take a PE course for each semester enrolled in the high school. Consequently, students will have a required set of core classes in math, science, social studies and English. Along with this core set of courses, students will have a number of elective courses to choose from. Currently, School Board policy indicates that all students need to be enrolled in seven classes each semester.

Ultimately, students need 48 total credits to graduate from Humboldt High School. If students pass all of their classes in a timely manner, they can graduate with more credits than the required total. However, we do face a challenge each year when scheduling courses at the high school. It becomes difficult to provide enough elective courses for 9th and 10th grade students to take prerequisite course work, while ensuring that all junior and senior students achieve a full course load. We are currently looking at ways to provide elective courses to 9th and 10th grade students, while providing some flexibility for 11th and 12th grade students to engage in both credit bearing and non-credit bearing workplace experiences.

Stay tuned as we continue to improve the course enrollment and scheduling process. As always, I appreciate your patience and support. Go Cats

Cassie Smith
Middle School Principal



Spring is coming...the kids (and adults) are getting antsy to see the sun and breathe the fresh air. When the weather allows, our staff and students work on building relationships and getting in some movement during PrimeTime at the end of the day. In the meantime, we are super busy finishing up quarter 3 and diving into the last quarter of the year in the classroom.

On Friday, March 17, our students spent the morning volunteering and giving back to those in need through Meals from the Heartland. Our students worked in teams of 8-10 to package meals. These meals help those in need right here in our Humboldt community, as well as provide meals in countries all over the world. It is always great to see our students working together for a good cause.

The other major task we will finish in March is Iowa State Assessments of Student Progress (ISASP). The ISASP tests measure our student's understanding in reading, writing, math, and science. Our goal is that our students perform at their best and demonstrate growth in their learning from one year to the next. The results of these assessments help our staff to set goals for next year, look at our current instructional practices and curriculum, and determine what areas we are doing well and what areas we need to improve in to better serve our students. We can't wait to see our hard work in the classroom shine through on these assessments. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out, my door is always open.



Mark Wenzel
Twin Rivers Elementary Principal

We at Twin Rivers have things going on as we march into spring. Each year about this time we try to evaluate what is going well at TR and what are some areas we want to improve upon. We have started gathering feedback through our school culture survey and will continue to get suggestions when our SIAC (School Improvement Advisory Committee) meets in April. After the information is gathered we put together an implementation plan. This plan includes many of the suggested ideas. Some of the ideas may not be included for a variety of reasons. Some ideas become long term goals in which we take progressive steps to accomplish the goal. All suggestions are taken seriously and really looked at because we want to provide the best educational experience possible. During this time of year is also when all of our students in grades 3rd through 5th will participate in the ISASP. The ISASP (The Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress) are assessments developed by Iowa Testing Programs at the University of Iowa for the state of Iowa. The assessments are aligned with the Iowa Core standards and provide a clear and accurate assessment of student learning outcomes. The students have recently enjoyed having a STAR LAB in our gymnasium to support units in our science curriculum. In April, the students will also be able to support a good cause as we participate in the American Heart Challenge. We will call our program Skate for Heart and students will participate in roller skating during our American Heart Challenge. As the weather warms up, we hope all the students and families get the opportunity to get outside and make new memories with one another. Happy Spring!

Creighton Jenness
Director of Special Education &
Middle School
Assistant Principal



At the end of my first year, I reflected with Mr. Murray about how the year had gone and the "next steps" to help improve Humboldt Community Schools. One goal that we've had since I started is to provide a succinct and predictable outcome for struggling students. That goal has many variables and potential setbacks, but it is necessary to fulfill our mission of "Learning and Success for all."

This succinct and predictable outcome for students is accomplished through an effective Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, MTSS process. It is still challenging for staff to come to a consensus on how best to serve all of our students. An essential component of the process is documentation. We document the struggles the students are experiencing and the interventions staff implemented. Our MTSS process is improving. Staff members are still learning about and developing ways to monitor student progress to measure the impact of the interventions for guiding decisions about the next steps. At Humboldt Middle School, we are exploring adding literacy and math intervention classes for struggling students. We are beginning to develop a system for recording student interventions and progress monitoring data. We can use this system to communicate more efficiently and effectively as students transition through our school district.