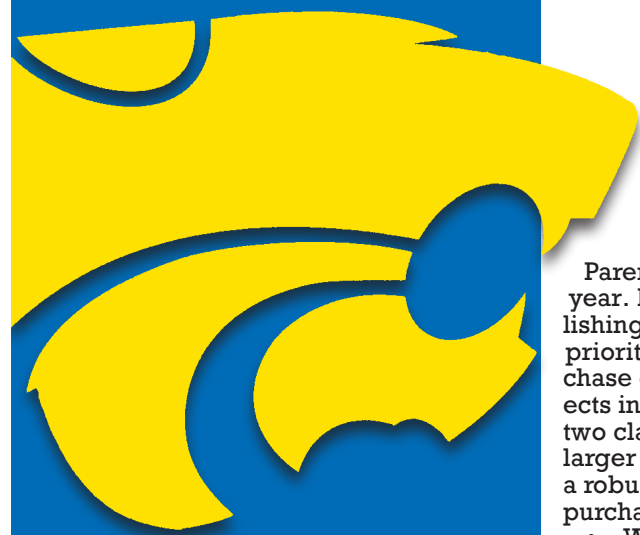


November 2022



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



Parent-teacher conferences are complete, and we are one-fourth through this school year. I am grateful to the staff for their preparation and the parents attending. Establishing a positive working partnership with our families remains among our highest priorities. Most noteworthy for our district is our school board's approving the purchase of the Farm Bureau/Bolt Nutrition property. We have several construction projects in place, including additional classroom space at the Humboldt Middle School, two classrooms and a gym at Taft Elementary, and a new athletic facility, including a larger weight training area, practice gym, and wrestling space. We have developed a robust future-ready plan for the district over the next ten years, and the property purchase is our last piece of the puzzle.

- We needed off-campus classroom space for our ALPHA "Alternative Learning Program for Humboldt Area" - our high school credit recovery program currently housed at the old middle school. The new location is perfect for that program. We plan to demo the old MS building after completing the Taft Elementary construction project.
- We needed classroom and office space for Mease Elementary School. Space is tight for AEA services, testing, and other partnerships.
- Affordability: we can't build office and classroom space for what we paid for the Farm Bureau property.
- Moving the Superintendent's Office provides Mease Elementary with a safe, secure entrance that all visitors must enter. The ALPHA program with the Superintendent at the location will include secured access, cameras, and greater administrative visibility and support if needed.

Sincerely,
Jim Murray, Superintendent

"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.

- The first school day in October is considered "Count Day." Each Superintendent, like me, sweats out enrollment numbers. Enrollment is the most critical indicator of the district's health. Fortunately, our district enrollment remains steady. I would have preferred an increase, but stability for a rural district in Iowa is manageable. Our district funding is tied to enrollment.
- Meeting the social-emotional needs of our students remains one of our most significant challenges.
- I am still waiting to receive the report from the Vulnerability Studies done at each building. Tighter visitor check-in procedures, more cameras, and ensuring the building doors are locked during the school day will be some of the recommendations.



Ryan Fedders Taft Elementary Principal

Hello, Wildcat families! We are already through our first trimester at Taft Elementary! We had an extremely busy month of September. Our playground was completed early in the month and opened up to students on October 14th; I have heard nothing but great things about this from staff/students/families. Before the cold weather hit, it was completely packed each evening when I would leave work. It has been a tremendous addition to our community!

Our staff was hard at work ensuring we are meeting all student needs throughout the beginning of the year, and we had our first round of meetings where we met with teachers, AEA staff, and myself to discuss student concerns in behavior and academics. These teams also determined interventions to begin implementing. The meetings occurred before our conferences at the end of October to provide parents with a solid, concrete update on how we can all work together as a team moving forward!

A challenge that our leadership team has found has been an ambitious PD schedule for our Wednesday afternoons. We set lofty goals in the summer, and have tried to combine a few different pieces of learning for our staff on these afternoons. The feedback that our team has received is that there just isn't enough time (this is never said in education!!) Our leadership team will take this feedback into account when planning future PD afternoons to ensure staff has the time needed to make the most effective instructional decision possible.

Finally, I wanted to provide families with a brief note about some upcoming report card work at Taft. Based on teacher feedback, we have formed a committee to look at our grading practices at the elementary level. The end goal for this committee over the course of the year will be to align our grading practices from grade level to grade level moving forward, as well as to make our report card as user-friendly to our families as possible. It will be a busy year with this, but we are hopeful that it can be implemented for the 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



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

How about those Wildcats and fall activities! WOW! I will say I am not ready for the cold weather, but I am excited for basketball season (more March Madness!) We are still waiting on our vulnerability assessment results from September which will determine how we use the \$50,000 grant money per building for safety enhancements. We are hoping to have that back soon to move forward. Mr. Murray, Officer Rutz and I did attend the Safe and Secure Schools - Empowering Staff to Plan and Respond Effectively in an Emergency. This was a great start to updating our crisis plan and seeing where we could make adjustments. We did get a license for an app called "Quick Access" that all staff members can download on their phones that provides all of the crisis information with plans in one spot. The app will work even when there is no cell service. Different alerts can be sent so that staff know what the emergency is and a list of all phone numbers with everyone in the district. We are still in the process of setting it up, but it will be beneficial if there were ever an emergency.

Another reminder that we do have the Safe School Helpline that can be used for anonymous reporting which is listed below.

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

Again, a positive, safe, and drug-free environment is always our number one priority! GO CATS!

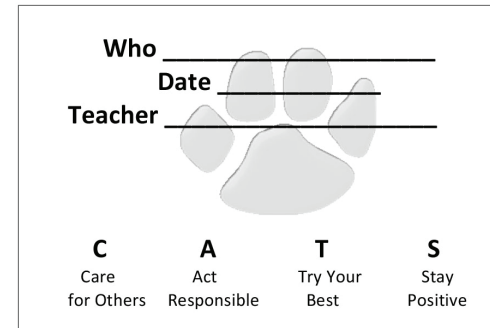


Lora Kester Director of Curriculum & Instruction, Mease Elementary Principal

We are certainly in full swing with Fall activities at Mease. In October we celebrated Fire Prevention week by having the fire truck come visit us here at school. The students had a great time touring the truck and learning about fire safety. We also welcomed the return of the fall costume parade at the end of October and we are looking forward to a hayrack ride on November 11th as part of a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

reward. PBIS is our framework for direct instruction and teaching of positive behaviors to all students. We teach classroom and building expectations and we "catch" the students making good choices. When they do, we give them a CATS card as a reminder for what they were doing right. We focus on caring for others, acting responsibly, trying our best and staying positive. Every Friday, we draw CATS card winners who then get to pick a prize. We also do building wide celebrations like the hayrack ride. Be sure to ask your child about the CATS cards. I am sure they will fill you in!

Sub shortages continue to be a challenge for us at Mease and throughout the district this year. Sometimes we have to get creative on how we cover paras and teachers. Safety is our utmost priority so we always consider that as we look at how we might rearrange staff when we are short on human resources. If you, or someone you know would like to sub in our district, please apply at the district office. It is a very rewarding part-time job!



Construction is underway for the new athletic training addition



Paul Numedahl High School Principal

Hello Wildcat Families! Fall is definitely here with cooler temperatures and nature's changing colors. I love the fall in Iowa and the gentle (typically) changing of the seasons. In Colorado, fall was pretty short with snow flying and school delays in early October. Don't miss that weather at all!

As many of you are aware, the phrase "Learning and Success for All" is our school district and high school motto. Our staff truly aspire to provide learning environments where all students learn and achieve at high levels. We review and analyze our processes, procedures and practices to not only improve, but identify and remove obstacles to learning. Unfortunately, one such obstacle typically includes a device most students have -- the smartphone. Smartphones are a wonderful piece of technology and when used appropriately, can be a powerful tool for learning. However, all too often, smartphones with their accompanying social media apps promote drama and division. Now, I am not in the camp that calls for a total ban on smartphones in schools. Smartphones are here to stay, so for me the question becomes how can we teach students to use devices responsibly. We do a pretty good job here at the school limiting phone use during class time with phone caddies and other storage systems in classrooms. However, more is needed to help students use their phones and social media apps effectively. I believe a good first step for teens is to have them recognize and track how much time they currently spend on their phones. This past spring, I routinely asked our students to go to their settings app and look up how much time per day they were spending on their phones. Most students had never done this and were astonished by the amount of time spent -- most averaged over 7 hours per day. I encouraged them to think about what they could do differently with their time if they cut just 2 or 3 hours off from their average phone usage.

If you have kids at home, I encourage you to ask them to predict, on average, how much time they spend on their phones. Have them then look up their average "screen time" per day. Most kids are not fully aware of how much time is spent on their phones. I realize that a recognition of screen time or phone usage will not solve the drama and division that inappropriate use of social media can cause, but it's a start. As a learning organization, the high school is committed to the idea of "Learning and Success for All" and will continue to find ways to teach about and promote appropriate cell phone and social media app use. Go Blue and Gold! Go Cats!!



Mark Wenzel Twin Rivers Elementary Principal

Hello Twin Rivers and Humboldt Community!

In the spirit of football season, we are falling forward here at Twin Rivers pushing for first downs on our many goals. Our annual pumpkin carving event was a great success as many students and families gathered to spend time together and build the Twin Rivers community. At the end of October, we had Parent-Teacher Conferences. This was a good time for us to celebrate students' gains throughout the year. Our parents and teachers used a team approach to evaluate data so we can continue pushing students toward their goals.

Our teachers have put forth tremendous effort with our MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports) process by providing the appropriate interventions to help close achievement gaps. We have adjusted our PLT (Professional Learning Team) into subgroups of lower elementary and upper elementary to better meet the needs of our students. Our staff continues to participate in Trauma-Informed Training and implement what they learn to help meet the social and emotional needs of our students. This continuous learning helps teachers reflect on their current practices and adjust their game plan for the future. We continue to learn lessons and make adjustments to improve the overall educational experience. We appreciate the efforts by the students, families, school board, staff and community as we continue to move through this school year.

During this time we would also like to extend a special thank you to the United States Veterans for the sacrifices and service they have devoted to our country. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Go Wildcat Family!



Cassie Smith Middle School Principal



It's hard to believe that the first quarter of the school year has come to an end. At the beginning of October, I had the privilege of taking 8 students to a Leadership Retreat at Lake Cornelia in Clarion. Humboldt joined 8 other conference schools to listen to and learn from Craig Hillier, a motivational speaker. He talked about the 5 Ps: People (work with and lead others), Passion (for whatever is in front of you), Perspective (how you view things), Process (the way you go about things), and Principles (your beliefs and morals). The feedback from our students was very positive, and they want to try to implement some of the ideas they learned here at Humboldt Middle School. Several students stated they want to try to implement the 5 Ps in our building, so we are going to meet to discuss how we might go about the implementation. A few takeaways that students stated they will use in their future include, "looking at what everybody brings to the table and always remembering that everybody is going through something," "the best leaders are good listeners," and "I try to do everything on my own and sometimes it's okay to ask for help." I have seen these students in the classroom and hallways since that retreat and noticed their leadership skills shining through. The goal will be to take what we all learned and find a way to share our skills and knowledge with others, building our capacity as student leaders who will make a positive impact both now and in the future! If you have any other ideas or suggestions on how to build our students as leaders, please let me know.

Creighton Jenness Director of Special Education & Middle School Assistant Principal



"Go slow to go fast" was a saying that my previous Special Education Director told me multiple times, and to be honest, it wasn't my favorite phrase. I like to go quickly to implement new learning. I now understand that he wasn't necessarily talking about the students but the other adults involved with implementing new ideas.

Over the past two years, we've dove feet-first into PLC work but now agree that we were moving too quickly. We were fortunate to have Dr. Luis Cruz come to Humboldt and present to our entire staff about getting the "full" understanding of the PLC process, along with reiterating what we have been working on as teams over these two years. We're seeing significant progress. The staff has greater clarity on what we want our students to know, how to assess learning, and the steps to implementing effective interventions.

By slowing down, I'm confident that we will increase achievement for all students as teachers will improve their instruction through the PLC collaborative opportunities provided.

