



# 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  
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Dakota City, IA 50529

**515-332-1330**



[www.humboldt.k12.ia.us](http://www.humboldt.k12.ia.us)



@OfficialHCSD



@humboldt\_csd

## Message from Superintendent Jim Murray



"I'm dreaming of a green Christmas." That would be my favorite holiday song. It is no secret that I'm not a fan of winter weather. Friday, December 9, was our first weather-related cancellation. It is truly a difficult decision whether road conditions are suitable for travel. There's no perfect system, and student safety is always our highest priority. Our district covers about four hundred square miles, approximately a fifteen-mile radius around Humboldt. I base decisions on road conditions reported by local transportation staff, county roads departments, and Iowa 511 travel information. Leo Reiglesberger, our district Transportation Director, does an excellent job assisting with researching and making recommendations. I couldn't do it without him. When deciding, I consider the amount of snow and ice accumulated, the hourly forecast, and the time it takes to clear our buildings' sidewalks and parking lots. I collaborate with neighboring superintendents. I monitor weather forecasts using local meteorologists and receive situation reports from the National Weather Service. One interesting piece of information to consider that families don't know is that our buses begin leaving at approximately 6:30 AM, roughly an hour before most staff and students start heading to school. Finally, I always try to remember we have a lot of inexperienced 15-year-old drivers with school permits. In the end, I make the final decision and am responsible. Erring on the side of caution is always best. I continue to appreciate the support I receive from our staff and families.

The holiday break is approaching quickly. I sincerely hope our staff and families have a joyful holiday season!

### "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.

We will receive construction quotes right after the New Year for the Taft Elementary addition, which includes two classrooms and a gymnasium, and our Middle School four-classroom addition. With the economy the way it is, I hope those construction costs are sufficient for our Future-Ready Facilities Plan.

We are still in great need of food service workers. I have helped in a couple of district kitchens and have enjoyed it. It is an excellent opportunity for some part-time work.

We continue to see challenging behavior and unsafe personal decision-making from a small percentage of our students. We receive support from Humboldt County Memorial Hospital, the Humboldt County Sheriff's Department, and the Humboldt Police Department. They are outstanding partners that help us with our struggle to meet our students' mental health needs.

Yikes! Having a snow day on December 9 before New Years isn't good. Let's hope that the recent weather isn't an indicator of a challenging winter.



**Ryan Fedders**  
Taft Elementary Principal

Our year at Taft is continuing to fly by; I hope that you all have a great upcoming holiday season! As I reflect upon the year so far, I am truly grateful for all of our wonderful staff at Taft Elementary. Our teachers have been hard at work over the first semester in their PLC teams. In the area of reading, teams have worked to fine-tune their identified priority standards, and all teams have begun/are ready to begin their PLC cycles focused on specific learning targets and assessments aligned with these standards. In math, our teams have spent some time on our full PD days beginning the process of identifying priority standards, and this will be completed by teams in January to begin our PLC cycles in math as well.

Shortly before we left for Thanksgiving break, our students met our building-wide PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) goal by earning over 5,500 total CAT Cards for the year. We celebrated this great student behavior by playing a few rounds of Virtual Bingo with our students via Google Meet. It was great to take a well-earned break for students to celebrate all of the hard work that they have been putting into their learning/behavior overall as the school year has progressed!

We were surprised a bit by our first snowfall falling sooner than expected in Mid-November. With our new playground, we hadn't identified our winter playground procedures/expectations, so our staff was quite flexible with these for a few days until the snow quickly melted. Our leadership team met in early December and clarified our expectations for winter weather moving forward as a building. Thank you to our parents for being responsive in sending boots, snow pants, and coats on quick notice with the snow/cold weather!

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

**Mark Wenzel**  
Twin Rivers Elementary Principal



Happy Holidays Twin Rivers Elementary and Humboldt Community!

During this holiday season, we hope you stay healthy and find time to enjoy what really matters – family and friends. We wish everyone a safe holiday season. On December 13th, our students participated in the annual Holiday Concert at Twin Rivers. There were showings at 2:00 and 6:30 for our families and community members to enjoy. Our students learn valuable skills when performing in front of an audience which also helps them in the classroom. Currently, our students are completing the mid-year diagnostic in iReady to measure their

growth and progress. Hitting the mid-point of the school year is a good time to reflect on our progress and continue to make adjustments to improve each students' school experience. We are thankful to be able to distribute another round of the Power Snack Coupons to our students before the break to help offset costs for our families. We would like to thank the Deb and Jeff Hansen Foundation, Cargill, Farm Credit, and Iowa Select Farms for continuing to support this program for our students. To get into the holiday spirit, teachers and students will have their holiday celebrations on December 22nd to spend time playing games and celebrating their hard work up to this point. When we come back from break, teachers will be completing a deep data dig on our current goals and how to adjust those goals to improve student gains. We are grateful to work with our students and enjoy their individual personalities, ideas, and contributions to the classroom. Each student has so much to offer based on their learning and individual experiences. It is really fun for our staff to get to know your children. Again, we want to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable holiday season. See you next year!





**Lora Kester**  
Director of Curriculum & Instruction,  
Mease Elementary Principal

At Mease we are in the full swing of winter activities. We are excited to be welcoming families back into the building for special events. It was so hard to let go of that during Covid. In October the costume parade returned where many families enjoyed the students as they strolled through the hallways at Taft. This month, preschool classes will celebrate the holidays with families during a special open house. In March, we are making plans for a pancake lunch where parents are invited to eat with their child. Field trips are also added back into our regular schedule. The preschool

classes took all students on an all day adventure to the Apple Orchard in Ft. Dodge and then activities at Gotch park. It was a blustery day but there were lots of smiles and memories created. This month, preschool and kindergarten students will enjoy Christmasland and a movie at the Humota Theater courtesy of our parent organization, PATHS. This year, parents are always welcome to join their child for lunch. Just be sure to call the office (332-3578) to let us know we will need an extra adult lunch before 9:30 a.m.

We are currently facing the challenge of attendance for both staff and students, with the many number illnesses throughout the community. Seems to come with the time of year. We continue to have opportunities to substitute if you are someone you know might be interested. Families have been great to recognize when students should stay home and then safely return to school when they are well.



**Cassie Smith**  
Middle School Principal

If you recall from my August newsletter, one of our middle school building-wide goals and areas for growth is centered around reducing the number of office referrals (which are typically related to inappropriate behaviors). To help support our students and reinforce more appropriate behaviors, we implemented PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports), which teaches students the expectations in different settings across the school. We explicitly taught students these expectations at each location at the start of the school year, and they are expected to display those appropriate behaviors. The teachers are looking for students who demonstrate those appropriate behaviors and reward them with CATS cards (Care

about each other; Act respectfully; Take responsibility; Stay safe). Students then turn in their CATS cards for incentives/rewards. We offer individual, class, grade-level, and school-wide incentives. At the end of October, we reached our first school-wide goal (with just over 11,000 CAT cards) and the students earned a fun "Fall Fest" afternoon. There were team-building activities (marshmallows & toothpick towers and Pictionary) and fun competitions (Hungry Hippos in the gym and hoola-hoop rock paper scissors). Our goal is for students to see that their appropriate behaviors around the school are being noticed. As we draw near to winter break, we are noticing a few more inappropriate behaviors around the building that we are working to address and we appreciate all the parent/guardian support we have received. Our job is to always provide explicit instruction to our students about more appropriate behavior in a given situation.



**Paul Numedahl**  
High School Principal

Hello Wildcat Families! I hope this message finds you well and enjoying the transition to winter. As I write this, more than 4 inches of heavy snow are on the ground. I am glad to have the moisture, so no complaints here.

Recently, I shared enrollment numbers with the Humboldt School Board. The purpose was to provide general patterns in Humboldt High School's enrollment data over several years. Specific years reviewed were 2012-2013 and 2022-2023, with trends noted. Some general patterns include a steady increase in high school enrollment over the specified period (2012-2013 school year enrollment = 437 students; 2021-2022 school year enrollment = 504 students). This is certainly good news as an increasing student population is much more desirable than a steady decline for obvious reasons. When analyzing course enrollment data, it was found that certain introductory elective courses have doubled enrollments over the specified time. These courses include Introduction to Agriculture, Introduction to Family and Consumer Sciences, and Introduction to Industrial Technology. Enrollments in our business courses have generally

increased over time as well.

Lastly, gender disparities continue to exist in course clusters like engineering, ag science, and industrial tech, although disparities are decreasing in some courses.

As a response to increased enrollment and interest in our Career and Technical Education (CTE) related courses, we are looking at possible ways to modify and enhance course and program offerings to meet the needs of our students. For clarification, CTE includes, but is not limited to, business, health sciences, engineering, ag science, building trades, industrial tech, and family and consumer science courses. With our goal of enhancing CTE programming in mind, a team of administrators, school board members, and teachers will be visiting different schools throughout Iowa to understand better how their respective CTE programs are designed to meet the needs of students. This includes visiting the Waterloo Career Center and Belmond-Klemme's high school greenhouse during the second full week in December. The purpose of such visits is not to emulate a certain program or course pathway but to get a sense of what certain CTE programs in the state are offering and apply these insights and learnings to our own program here at Humboldt.

Stay tuned for updates as we continue to improve our educational programs. As always, I thank you for supporting our students, teachers, and Humboldt High School. Go Cats!

**Creighton Jenness**  
Director of Special  
Education &  
Middle School  
Assistant Principal



Quite a few things are going on in the district with Special Education. We have received our "score" from the IDEA-DA (Special Education District Accountability Department of Education), and our designation was "meets requirements." We are pleased for this designation, as it helps us know that we are on our way to meeting our goal of being the best Special Education Department in the State. Another exciting thing going on with our whole Special Education Department is the work we are doing with our PLTs (Professional Learning Teams). We are working on finding the skills and subskills of Reading Comprehension (K-12). We will also be working on Reading Fluency, Math, Writing, and Behavior in the future. Articulating which skill(s) / subskill(s) each student needs is a significant step in meeting our goal. Every five years, we must update our DDSD (District Developed Special Education Delivery Service Plan). We will be starting this process in January and asking for volunteers to look over our current DDSD and make changes to how we plan Special Education for the next five years. If you are interested in this, please contact Creighton Jenness via email (cjenness@humboldt.k12.ia.us) or call the Middle School and ask to speak with me (515-332-2812).

One of our significant struggles continues to be our new IEP system. Most of our Special Education teachers have used the old system for almost their careers, so this change is difficult. We appreciate our AEA partners for their help with this change and for helping all of our staff and students progress with the skills they need.

## Families Can Still Apply for Free and Reduced Meal Prices

Children need healthy meals to learn. Humboldt Community School District offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$2.10; lunch costs \$2.80 (K-4) / \$2.85 (5-12). Your children may qualify for free meals/milk or for reduced-price meals. The reduced price is \$0.30 for breakfast and \$0.40 for lunch. An application can be found on the Humboldt Community School District Website under the "Parents" link. Return or mail the completed application to: Humboldt Community Schools, Attn: Lacey Casady PO Box 130, Dakota City, IA 50529.

### WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS?

All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-formerly Food Assistance in Iowa), the Family Investment Program (FIP), or a few specific Medicaid programs are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Foster children under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.

Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.

Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.

Children may receive free or reduced-price meals if their household's income is at or below the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines (see Humboldt Community School Website under "Parents- Student Waivers and Reduced Fees."

