

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



Mother nature has certainly shown her true colors this year! At Mease, the students and staff have adjusted well to late starts, early outs, and no school days. It will be nice to get into a regular routine with full weeks of school! We are already gearing up for the 2023-24 school year. Our Preschool Round-Up Open House is scheduled for March 7th from 4:30-6:30. On March 14th, our current Kindergarten students do not have school and we will welcome new incoming students for Kindergarten Round-Up in a morning and afternoon session. We always look forward to meeting our new group of students. For more information and to pre-register, please contact our office at 515-332-3578.

At Mease, we continue to focus on teaching our youngest students how to work positively with others. We do this through focused social skills lessons and Purposeful Play. As a staff, we have been learning how to structure play so that students can practice what they have learned. One challenge has been our schedule. We have small chunks of time for this important initiative but need to restructure it for next year so we can have one bigger block of time for this learning.

We are in year two of implementing a new literacy curriculum. This year Preschool purchased the same curriculum to align to Kindergarten. Kindergarten students are reading decodable texts, and preschoolers are getting solid instruction in letter sounds. It has been fun to watch students as lightbulbs go off in reading and writing.



**Paul Numedahl**  
High School Principal

Hello Wildcat Families! I hope this message finds you well and warm. As I write this newsletter, there are, quite literally, piles of snow on the ground and temperatures below zero. It's hard to imagine that in three short months, the frost will be out of the ground, farmers will be in the field with the countryside turning green.

In past newsletters, I have shared the idea of our high school being an organization focused on continuous improvement. No organization is "perfect" and striving to be so is a slippery slope that can easily lead to frustration and hopelessness. Taking a stance of continuous improvement is a different orientation. It recognizes the futile nature of perfection by embracing action toward a growth and improvement no matter the circumstance or change in situation. In staying true to this ideal, we continue to improve our Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) processes and procedures. As you may remember, MTSS is a series of supports, strategies, and interventions provided for all students to ensure equitable access to the high school learning environment. Recently, the high school administered FastBridge Assessments for reading and math to students in 9th through 11th grades. The goal of these assessments is to provide a quick snapshot of student learning in those two subject areas and offer potential interventions for students needing extra support. These interventions and supports are provided during our 25-minute CATs time, so no classroom instruction is missed. As with any new initiative, the roll out is gradual and deliberate. Currently, our CATs time is focused on making up work, taking tests, and/or providing help on assignments. We will still provide these services but will be adding interventions to CATs time as well. Providing intervention during CATs time is new to the high school. A deliberate and timed implementation allows for adjustments and modifications to improve our teaching practice.

Stay tuned as we continue to improve our MTSS process. As always, I appreciate your patience and support. Go Cats!



**Mark Wenzel**  
Twin Rivers Elementary Principal

**Hello Twin Rivers and Humboldt Communities!**

It has definitely been a winter wonderland as we've adjusted our schedules based on the weather. It was fun having the students return to school and hearing about the holiday adventures and traditions you all participated in. It was nice to finally have a consistent run of school days to reestablish routines and expectations coming back from the holiday season. Students are getting back into the swing of things as we prepare for the upcoming Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP). The assessments are aligned with the Iowa Core standards and provide a clear and accurate assessment of student learning outcomes. Student

growth, proficiency and readiness indicators will be reported.

At Twin Rivers, we follow the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) process. The students have opportunities throughout the year to earn school-wide incentives for positive behavior. In January, the Twin Rivers students earned the incentive of playing board games. Students were smiling and laughing while they played different games with their classmates. At the beginning of January, Twin Rivers was surprised with a visit from Sheriff Kruger and Deputy Sheriff Lampe. Students were excited to engage in conversation with the officers over lunch. As we begin the second half of the school year, we would like to thank the parents for their continued communication, effort and support. School success is a team effort and we could not do it without them. We would also like to thank the Twin Rivers School Board, the Twin Rivers Community, the Humboldt Community and all of the partnerships that help support the success of Twin Rivers Elementary. Your efforts do not go unnoticed. Until next time, have a safe and happy winter!

**Cassie Smith**  
Middle School  
Principal



Back in August, in my first few days at the helm, I had to make a decision for our building that declared which tool we want to use for our universal diagnostic screener, and I chose FASTBridge, aligning with what the elementary school was doing and what the high school was planning to do. This change didn't come easy for our staff, but with the help of our instructional coaches, Andrea Laubenthal and Jen Savery, and the tenacity of our staff, we jumped in! After the students took the assessment in September, the data provided allowed us to identify which students were proficient and which students need additional interventions. These diagnostics specifically tell us what students need and which interventions/instruction will match that need. Students are placed in small groups for this specific instruction and we progress monitor regularly to make sure we are seeing the intended progress or if we need to adjust our instruction. When we look at the growth our students are making from the fall screener (September) to the winter screener (January), although it's only one datapoint, we are seeing positive growth in all grade levels! Our major focus for this year is to improve our reading scores, and the hard work our staff and students are putting in is revealed in the data. For AutoReading, scores went from an average of 525 to 531; aReading went from an average of 529 to 533; and math went from an average of 222 to 224. Kudos to our staff for digging in, doing the work to prep for and meet the needs of our students, and to our students for doing the work needed to see these positive results! We will continue doing the hard work and hope to see the positive growth continue.



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

When looking at everything in the educational world, many things could cause us to worry. You may have heard about significant educational issues, including vouchers, higher class numbers, lack of funding, more accountability, etc. Many things are going great in public despite these challenges and changes. These things include having over 900 students added to the Public School count this year, looking at more ways to help build capacity in our educators with increased professional development opportunities, and improving support for struggling teachers.

In Humboldt, we are fortunate to have a district that looks at our decision-making based on what we believe is best for our students. Smaller class sizes are a priority. We are also exploring ways to help increase the support for our students, staff, and families. One example is the systematic approach we have been taking to improve our school. We are looking at improving the buildings, our Multi-Tiered System of Support, and the teacher evaluation process to build for better safety and support for all students.

One positive story to leave you with starts in a classroom where I was in doing an observation. During our observation preconference, the teacher and I talked about how to engage students better. Because of how the curriculum presented the topic, we discussed different engagement strategies. When I entered the classroom, the students were highly engaged and excited to demonstrate their learning. The teacher could have taken the "easy" way out and just had the students sit to learn a concept, but this teacher went the extra mile to ensure that the students were engaged and used multiple strategies to help the students learn the material.