

Message from Superintendent Jim Murray



Fall is upon us, and our 2023-2024 school year is in “full swing.” I have visited the buildings and pitched in as new routines get established. I often ask the students how their year has started. I appreciate their optimism and honesty in answering. Last week, I was in the high school lunchroom and asked how our new principals and teaching staff were doing. I was impressed with the maturity of their answers. They had good things to say but also shared that they were supportive and patient with new staff as they got to know them better. I helped introduce the new teacher evaluation framework during our preschool professional development. The framework clearly describes what excellent teaching looks like while offering an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their current practice and set goals for improvement. I am thankful for our talented instructional coaches as teacher leaders who are leading the new learning. Much of my time remains focused on completing our many construction projects. Here is an update:

- The restrooms out at the sports complex were a hit! There were no lines during halftime of the football game, with as many as eight stalls in the women’s restroom. We have had some minor issues to “unclog,” yes, toilet humor! The bathrooms are a significant improvement to our facility.
- The new sports facility on the southwest side of the sports complex is close to completion. There may be a supply chain issue with one of the air conditioning units that could slow down the installation of the practice gym floor.
- The front office project at the high school is well underway and on schedule for spring completion.
- The Taft Elementary two-classroom addition and gym have started. The contractor’s goal is to be enclosed by winter for inside work.
- We have a couple of small projects that we are working on. We added concrete south of the concession stand to the softball field fence.
- We opened our kitchen in the high school cafeteria, allowing students more efficiency and time to eat.

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; they know education is challenging.

- Supply chain issues have gotten the best of us, ranging from countertops at Taft Elementary and Humboldt High School to an air conditioning unit at the new athletic facility. I appreciate our staff’s patience and flexibility as they wait for project completion.
- Like everyone, we need rain. We are going to be seeding some construction areas. The cool weather will help. We need Mother Nature to provide some rain, or watering will be labor intensive.
- Count Day is October 1. One of the most significant stresses as a Superintendent is the yearly enrollment count. I’d love to see “increasing.” I welcome “steady.” Our school funding is based on enrollment.

Creighton Jenness

Director of Special Education & Middle School Assistant Principal



The school year is officially off and running! Our staff and students are beginning to get back into “school mode,” and things are going well. One of the things that always amazes me is when the students return from summer and have matured so much. I have had countless students come and advocate for their needs and ways to support their learning. It makes me genuinely happy and proud of our students who advocate for themselves! I have also been impressed with how our staff has jumped in and developed great relationships with our students. Seeing our new staff jump in and have fun while providing engaging lessons with our students has been great.

Although there have been a lot of great things that have been happening at the Middle School this year, there have also been some challenges. One of the challenges is the new curriculum that we have in math. With new curriculums, there is always a “dip” in confidence and being unsure of what to do.

We have great math teachers, and they will be able to “get over this bump” and continue onward. Another challenge is the chaos of the beginning of the school year student schedules. This was my first full year to help create the schedule, and there were a few hiccups. We’ve got to the point where we think we have all of our student’s schedules ready to go, and class changes have occurred.

Jessica Goodenow

Assistant High School Principal Director of Safety and Mental Health



You learn a lot about students when you supervise the lunch waves! Walking through the cafeteria and hallways, I learn about engaging classrooms, family events, before and after school activities, the music they are interested in, and more! There is a collective theme on what is shared related to the school setting. Engaging classrooms led by enthusiastic teachers are student favorites. Growth and leadership opportunities in extracurricular activities prioritize student voices, leading to the “wild-cat way” that our Student Senate is spreading.

The safety app QuickAccess, utilized by the district, has been used for test drills and lockdown communication. QuickAccess allows all employees’ mobile devices to receive threat notifications quickly and have district crisis policies at the click of a button. Several staff members still need access, especially those shared between buildings. Technology can aggravate, and the staff has been gracious with their questions and level of patience. At the high school, officers led drug dogs through the building to check backpacks and lockers at the end of August. Students were cooperative in leaving backpacks in the middle of the hallways. No drugs were found in lockers or backpacks. Having a safe, drug-free school is a top priority. The relationship that the Humboldt Community School District has built with law enforcement is impressive. I look forward to working further with them as we enforce safety protocols throughout the district.

As September progresses, I am focused on building relationships with students who have difficulties with attendance. Attendance is imperative to gaining credits to graduate. While I am learning names and faces, some students are slipping out without permission, causing frustration for our office staff. My skill set is not centered around monitoring cameras. I enjoy being visible in the building and watching students interact socially and academically. We are looking for progress and not perfection and are grateful for the families supporting these efforts.

Cassie Smith

Middle School Principal



The first few weeks of school have gotten off to a great start. It has been so fun to see the students back in the building, interacting with their peers, and having some fun learning new things. I’ve tried to check in with several students, ask how their summer went, and let them know I am glad to see them back in the middle school!! My favorite thing to observe is when a student sees a teacher they haven’t talked to since last May. Their faces just light up which affirms to me that our teachers are doing an amazing job at building relationships with students and our students have adults in the building they can go to.

It’s also been great to have staff back in the building...it gets pretty lonely during the summer! Our professional development days were filled with new learning. From meeting the new staff to looking at assessment data to building our skills around de-escalation strategies, and even a little homage to Ted Lasso as I tied some of his leadership ideals into our building goals and initiatives.

One of my current challenges is finding time to really get to know all of our students and help our new students feel welcome in our building. Learning 450+ names is not an easy task, but spending time in classrooms, visiting with them at lunch, and being available to students, allows me to make some great connections with students.

As we roll into the next month, I am looking forward to the fun and excitement that all of the homecoming events bring. I am also looking forward to getting into classrooms and seeing all of our new curriculum in action. It’s exciting to see the students engaged in learning! As always, if you have any ideas or suggestions, please feel free to contact me.

Ryan Fedders

Taft Elementary Principal



Our year at Taft is off to a great start; I hope your student has said the same at home! Over the first few weeks, I’ve heard from many students about what is going well. 1st graders are big fans of the new playground - having a great space to play is something we are thankful for! Our new-to-the-building/district students have appreciated the choice in lunch. Our kitchen staff does a wonderful job of providing fresh options for lunch, including a salad bar with multiple options.

The August workshop days with teaching staff went well. We spent some time with teachers introducing our new evaluation system, which focuses on teacher reflection and growth. Our staff will continue to unpack this monthly on our early-out Wednesdays. We also spent some time learning more about morning meetings; this is something that I have loved seeing in action as the year has progressed! From seeing first graders look each other in the eyes, shake hands, and greet each other by name, 2nd graders participate in a game of “Hot/Cold” or 3rd graders share their Labor Day weekend plans, it has been great to see intentional relationship building occur at the beginning of each day!

While many things are going well, we still have some areas we are working to improve. Due to state directives, our lunch flow had to change, so our teaching staff and students have been working to get new routines/schedules down. We also have a positive problem at Taft; we are up about 20 students from what we expected last May, along with an additional section overall at Taft. Space is tight, especially in the mornings before students enter rooms. The addition can’t come soon enough! I continue to be grateful for staff that helps with supervision/gives up some of their space for students to utilize before our day begins.

I’m looking forward to our upcoming Sept. 18th Professional Development Day. We will have our math curriculum representatives in the building to support teachers with our Illustrative Math implementation, and we will also kick off our PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) for the year. My boys have enjoyed getting out to some student activities when the weather has been nice; we’ll continue to jump at any chance to get out of the house and burn some energy off that we can!

Mark Wenzel

Twin Rivers Elementary Principal



Hello Twin Rivers & Humboldt Communities,

The year is underway at Twin Rivers and our hallways are abuzz with the excitement of a new academic journey. We are thrilled to welcome back our students and staff as we embark on a year filled with learning, growth, and memorable experiences. Here’s a glimpse into what’s been happening and what lies ahead:

Student Stories from Summer Break

Many of our students shared their adventures from the summer break, which included quality time with extended family, exciting trips, and, of course, the occasional sibling rivalry. It seems that battling with siblings is a universal summer activity! We love hearing about the diverse experiences that shape our students’ lives.

Empowering Our Staff with a New Teacher Evaluation System

Our dedicated staff members are hard at work, adapting to a new teacher evaluation system. This innovative approach involves staff members actively participating in the evaluation process, providing valuable feedback, and setting personal goals to tailor their professional development. This initiative underscores our commitment to fostering a supportive and growth-oriented environment for our educators.

Morning Meetings to Elevate Student Voices

We have introduced an exciting new initiative at Twin Rivers – morning meetings that encourage students to express their thoughts, feelings, and concerns. These meetings aim to enhance school culture and set a positive tone for each school day by giving students a voice and fostering a sense of community.

Promoting Safety and Partnership

This year, we had a remarkable joint Bus/Road Safety experience, featuring the Sheriff’s Department, the Bode Fire Department, and Leo, our school Transportation Director. They presented and demonstrated safety measures in these critical areas, and the response from our students was overwhelmingly positive. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to these departments for their ongoing partnership.

New Routines and Expectations

At the beginning of each school year, we embrace the challenge of establishing new routines and expectations. We are delighted to report that our students have started the year on a fantastic note, and we look forward to their continued success.

Food Service Update

We have made efforts to refine our food service, and one of the changes we’ve implemented is transitioning from offering two meal choices daily to providing only one meal option per day. This adjustment aligns with our objectives of minimizing waste, particularly considering our smaller school size. I must admit that adhering to my diet remains a challenge, primarily because we are fortunate to have a talented cook, and the food prepared by OPAA is exceptionally delicious.

Upcoming Events

As we move forward, we are eagerly anticipating opportunities to connect with parents during parent-teacher conferences. Mark your calendars for our annual Family Fun Night on October 10th, where you can join in the excitement of pumpkin carving. We also welcome the cooler temperatures of fall and the adventures that this school year holds for all of us.

We are excited about the journey ahead and remain committed to providing the best possible educational experience for our students. Together, we will make this school year at Twin Rivers one to remember.

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

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Travis Sprague

Humboldt High School Principal



It has been a whirlwind and successful start to the high school’s 2023-2024 school year. I have enjoyed getting to know our students, families, and community members. Discussing with students their rationale for selecting courses and their plans after high school is exciting. So far, students’ plans have included entering the workforce locally, joining the military, getting a trade certification, taking the community college route, and attending a four-year university. Students are looking forward to our Homecoming Week beginning Monday, September 18. My message to students this school year is: “Wildcats are not average, strive for excellence.”

We are focused on progress, not perfection, regarding professional development at the high school. We have set two goals as a staff for this school year. Our first goal is to strengthen our communication and stakeholder partnerships. We have outstanding students, staff, families, and community members, and we want to continue to work together to improve our bond. Our second goal is a simple equation: increase attendance + decrease failure rate = increased graduation rate.

This is a formula for high school student success, and our staff is working hard to help ensure this. Our staff has also focused on a new evaluation framework and analyzing data to support our students and their learning outcomes.

The first few days at the high school were quite warm and sticky, and I greatly appreciated my students’ and staff’s focus and dedication. Our custodial staff found solutions to improve airflow. The high school has room for growth in building routines around attendance, scheduling, and general expectations, but we will rise to the occasion over time. We have a solid foundation at Humboldt High School.

We are nearing the end of our new athletic facility’s construction, and I look forward to its opening in October. If you were able to attend our first football game, you noticed that our new restrooms are now open. This will help better serve our fans and ensure we are great hosts for our visitors.

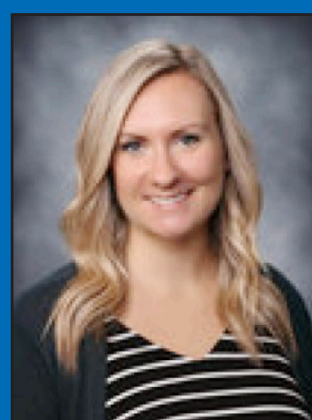


Go Wildcats!!!



Jenna Haselhuhn

Mease Elementary Principal Director of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment



It was wonderful to see the students’ excitement as we started the first couple of days of school. They have that bright twinkle in their eye that draws teachers in and gets them excited too. At the preschool and kindergarten level they love school and seeing their teacher. I hope we continue to contribute to that as they go about their education. It is really what drives us as teachers and reminds us why we are in this profession.

Before school started staff had a lot of professional development and they took it in stride. Professional development at the beginning of the year is hard when they just want to be in the classroom getting ready for students. They did a great job of showing that they still value learning, even if it might not be their first choice this time of year. I appreciated their focus and positivity. We had a lot of great learning!

This year we are starting a new math curriculum and with that comes some challenges. Anything new is an adjustment, just unpacking all the boxes is time-consuming! Ensuring we have all our materials is important as well. When we get large shipments of materials, it’s important for people to double and triple-check that we have everything. Then, we get to dig into the actual work and get acquainted with what we are teaching students. It’s a lot of work but, again, our teachers do a tremendous job of getting the work done so they are ready for students.

This next month of school I am looking forward to digging into Morning Meetings and seeing the impact it will have on our students throughout the day. Morning Meetings start students off on the right foot for the day by greeting their classmates, sharing something about themselves, doing a class activity, and hearing about the schedule for the day. I am eager to see the long-term impact it will have on our students to ensure they feel that sense of belonging at school.