



Travis Sprague
Humboldt High School Principal

I am pleased to report a successful beginning to our 2024-2025 high school year. Several changes have occurred that have increased our safety. I thank our families and visitors for using our secure front entrance. Our students have thoroughly impressed me with their seamless adaptation to this change. Our students understand that our primary objective is to keep them safe. Our safe and secure front entrance allows us to provide an outstanding learning environment for our students and staff.

The State of Iowa has brought about another change for the high school: our attendance policy. We want to emphasize two things as we work with students and families on these attendance changes. First, we want our students in school as much as possible. We know that illness, injury, and

other events will occur, but our greatest predictor of student success is consistent attendance. We know that good things will happen if a student attends class. We also know that students who attend class are in a safe environment. Second, we want to continue caregiver communication when absences occur. Parents and guardians have been excellent with their communication so far, and if we keep this up for the entire school year, students will succeed.

Finally, I want to discuss our students' long-term safety and stability after high school graduation. We want students to graduate from Humboldt High School with the skills and abilities to successfully enter the workforce, join the armed services, and/or attend college. We refer to these pathways as the 3Es: employable, enlistable, and enrollable. By providing continual educational opportunities for each of these pathways, we help ensure our Wildcats' long-term safety, security, and stability.



Jessica Goodenow
Assistant High School Principal Director of Safety and Mental Health

I am thrilled to share that our high school students and staff have had a wonderful start to the 2024-2025 school year. A priority of ours was increased parking lot supervision from day one. The addition of Deputy Michael Vinsand to our Humboldt Community School District staff has made all the difference in this area outside. This was a change for our students. We had to clarify the difference between "loitering" and "hanging out" in the parking lot. During school hours, the parking lot is not a place to spend lunch, study hall, or excess amounts of time. We understand that 5-10 minutes is acceptable to ready yourself for coming into the building and exiting. We have beautiful facilities that

have been vandalized with burnouts, trash, and disrespectful conduct. Your support of keeping our campus alcohol and drug-free starts with supporting these efforts.

Our district-level crisis team met on Tuesday, September 3. This group of community leaders, teachers, and administrators are invested in making our schools safer. The building-level groups spent time brainstorming and celebrating progress. Here are some of the areas that were listed: School Resource Deputy Vinsand, E3 app for drills and alerts, Stop the Bleed and ALERT training, updating locks and keypad entry, routine testing of emergency radio with Humboldt County dispatch, vinyl coverings for windows and doors, training our substitute teachers, and more. Our goals for the school year are to continue updating locks and doors, fund, compile, and disperse Go-Kits, create scenarios for teachers to practice protocols outlined in our crisis manual, and proactively advocate for the needs of our staff, community, and students.

Each day, we have an opportunity to be optimistic and grateful to be on the educational journey of our students. Our students are rising to the challenge of increased expectations in attendance, the parking lot, and academic and extracurricular handbook updates. I look forward to cheering them on through the fall season. What a great time to be a Wildcat!



Creighton Jenness
Director of Special Education & Middle School Assistant Principal

School is off to a quick start at the Middle School. Our students have displayed excellent behavior, reassuring me that we have some of the best kids we could ever hope for. For example, a classroom of 8th graders wanted to throw a going-away party for one of our students leaving us. These same students organized a welcoming party for a new student who recently moved to the United States. Their teacher was incredibly proud of her class's thoughtfulness and inclusivity.

During our short journey this year, we also had a few bumps in the road. We are fortunate to have a sizable 5th-grade class of 131 students. The large fifth-grade numbers present challenges with class sizes, scheduling,

and available resources. We are lucky to have such great teachers. Through teamwork, flexibility, and problem-solving, staff "rolled their sleeves up" to provide solutions, leading to an excellent education for all. We have begun designing next year's schedule to anticipate staff and space needs for 2025-2026. I have confidence in our building leadership team to creatively solve all of the "road bumps" this year and prepare us for next year.

Cassie Smith
Middle School Principal



As the new year settles in, our students are beginning to grasp the routines and expectations around the building. A significant part of this is our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program, which we use to instill the right conduct in every aspect of the school day. We dedicated a portion of the first week to explaining expectations around the building, safety reminders from law enforcement and EMS personnel, and bus evacuation procedures. We then reinforce positive behavior with CAT cards that students can exchange for incentive items!

One of the routines we are working through is lunchroom procedures. For our 5th-grade students, it is always a learning curve to figure out how lunch works, so we have spent time reviewing and practicing the lunchroom expectations. In addition to the new procedures, the current 5th-grade class is larger than we typically see, so it is taking longer to get them all through the lunch line. This also causes a chain reaction for other classes to get to lunch on time. I appreciate the older students thinking about when they were in 5th grade and how much practice it takes to get the lunch system figured out, and they have been so patient!!

Every new school year presents challenges, and I'm thankful to have great students and staff willing to work through and rise above the challenges together!



Ryan Fedders
Taft Elementary Principal

We've had a great start to the year at Taft; it's hard to believe we're already nearing the halfway point of September! One of the biggest highlights to start our year has been the use of the new gym. We have students utilize this space in the morning before our day begins. While in the gym, students have the option to sit

and chat with friends or walk and talk around the perimeter to get their blood flowing before the day begins. It's been a much better alternative than having students wait in the hallway!

We've also had a smooth start to the year in the lunchroom. Our procedures remained mostly unchanged from last year, which made things run more smoothly on day 1, especially with our 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders. We also built the schedule to allow our 1st graders to be in the lunchrooms without another grade level, so this has helped them transition to new building routines.

We have had some scheduling pieces to work out, like the beginning of each year. Things are always tighter time-wise on day one than they are on day twenty; a lot of this ends up working itself out, but we have changed our schedule slightly to allow specials teachers more travel time to Mease, along with adjusting a few timing issues to get grade levels to specials quicker. At the beginning of the year, it's also always a challenge to transition our new 1st graders to a new building. We're fortunate to have a tremendous staff at Taft, so it was all hands on deck the first few weeks of school to ensure students were getting where they needed to be before and after the school day!

Our FAST screening testing is wrapping up this week. David Wirtz, our instructional coach at Mease and Taft, has spent a great deal of time this summer and into the fall organizing an "intervention bank" to help provide teachers with resources for intervention and enrichment. We are excited to start groups and have resources aligned to targeted student needs.

We're looking forward to building upon a great start! As always, do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have this year. The number for Taft is 515-332-3216, and my email address is rfedders@humboldt.k12.ia.us.