



Travis Sprague
Humboldt High School Principal

As we near the end of our first quarter, Humboldt High School has much to celebrate. Our students, staff, families, and community's vibrant Wildcat spirit was on full display during Homecoming Week. I want to thank Mr. Ryan O'Hern, Mrs. Beth Short, Ms. Emily Willadsen, and Mrs. Justine Hellman for their exceptional efforts in organizing various activities, including school decorations, the parade, coronation, pep rally, queen's volleyball tourney, dodgeball tournament, and more. I am continually inspired by the passionate support our Wildcat crowds show at our volleyball and football games and halftime performances.

Students have developed routines and habits after more than 30 school days. Many of those routines and habits have benefited our students, including a restful night's sleep, staying hydrated, eating breakfast/lunch, arriving to school/class on time, completing homework, asking questions in class, communicating with their teachers when they will be gone, making up their missing work, studying for tests and quizzes, and being attentive and engaged in class. The challenge for some students is breaking unproductive habits and routines that negatively impact their attendance, grades, and ability to participate in extracurricular activities.

The high school is beginning the process of adopting a new Science curriculum. This in-depth process involves administration and teachers articulating the "big ideas" in science, the essential standards within science, and the overarching themes that students need to understand to succeed after high school. We will review various curricular options and identify the pros and cons of each. Our goal is that our new curriculum supports our district's mission of learning and success for all.

First quarter ends on Thursday, October 17. HHS is excited to offer two types of conferences for our students and families. On Monday, October 21, we will schedule grade-level team conferences to support students and families. Thursday, October 24, will be individual teacher conferences that can be scheduled or unscheduled. Our conferences will be from 3:30-7:30 on both nights.



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

There is always something to smile about at Humboldt High School! We were pleasantly surprised with the clever participation in Homecoming Dress Up Days. Our marching band placed 2nd in 3A at Algona Band Days. Our athletic teams continue to dominate on the trail, court, and field. Our musical crew is putting in the work for the November show. We now look forward to greeting, congratulating, and having productive conversations during parent-teacher conferences on October 21 and 24.

I find most of my smiles happen during our lunch waves at the high school. Lunch has changed since some of our alumni readers have walked these halls. On a typical day, our exceptional lunch ladies will have 5 or more options for our students. These range from pizza, salads, sub sandwiches, and various hot entrees. Food, unstructured conversations, and choice in seating lend themselves to a break from the classroom structure. I enjoy having lunch supervision. Part of my job is to pull students into my office based on discipline issues and attendance concerns. Lunch is my opportunity to talk to students who will most likely never have discipline or attendance issues. It is also my opportunity to make sure students remain in the building if they do not have open campus privileges. I would encourage you to ask your student or a high schooler you may know what their favorite lunch is. The baked potato bar may be the answer!

We continue to have great communication with families on our new attendance policy. Thank you to guardians for calling in your students, emailing our front office staff, getting doctor's notes, and encouraging good attendance. Soon, our grading period will end and we will be sending out certified letters to homes for students who have been absent 10% during that window. We will also set up meetings for students who are 15% absent and fulfill our truancy process for students who reach 20%. If you have questions about attendance, please stop by my office or give me a call (515-332-1430). It is a privilege to be a part of the HCSD Wildcat family.



Creighton Jenness
Director of Special Education & Middle School Assistant Principal

Many things are going well at Humboldt Middle School. We have finished selecting student leaders to help lead our school body in various ways, including students who will be ambassadors, help navigate our school climate, and make decisions that impact our school decisions. These groups will help determine the culture and climate of the Middle School and move it in a direction they see it need to move towards. It is excellent to get students involved in the decision-making process for the school at an early age so that they start to have experiences in ways to help with positive change and understand that they have a positive impact on the school environment.

The weather is changing, and we won't have as many opportunities for the kids to get outside for activities. We know that students need to get moving more often, which is more challenging due to the cold weather. We usually see an increase in student misbehaviors and poor attitudes. We try to get students involved with extra activities or get them outside when we have random "nice" days to combat this issue. For me, it is also Special Education Count time. I audit all student Individual Education Plans, "IEPs," to ensure the district receives accurate funding. The reporting and audit process is very time-consuming, especially with some new requirements this year.



Cassie Smith
Middle School Principal

As we approach mid-October, we are in the full swing of teaching and learning. In September, our students completed the FAST test, which helped us identify what our students knew about reading and math. Teachers spent time looking at student data results and placing students in a variety of intervention groups targeting instruction to focus on the skills that each student needs to help them make growth no matter where they start. Our interventions range from reteaching early literacy and math skills to book clubs, to a school newsletter, to extension opportunities, and many things in between!

Recently, some of our 8th graders visited Iowa Central Community College to learn about post-secondary opportunities, career choices, and hands-on activities, which they will use to develop their 4-year plans for the high school courses they want to take to reach their post-secondary goals. Those students who didn't go this fall will attend in the spring.

I had the privilege of taking eight students to a Leadership Retreat at Lake Cornelia in Clarion a few weeks ago. Humboldt joined eight other conference schools to listen and learn from speaker Craig Hillier. 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 around you), Process (the way you go about things), and Principles (your beliefs and morals). The feedback from students was very positive, and they wanted to implement some of the ideas they had learned in middle school. A few takeaways that students stated they would use in their future include:

- "You don't always have to be a loud, vocal leader; leaders also need to listen and take in other's points of view,"
- "Your body language, focus, and self-talk can have a major impact on how you lead"
- "The power of 'Yes, And' which adds to ideas and brings others into discussions, rather than shutting down ideas and excluding people"
- "The pizza was delicious" (spoken like a true middle school student!)
- The goal is to share our learning with others to bring a positive impact to our building.

Lastly, I am looking forward to Parent/Teacher conferences coming up on October 21 & 24. It is great to have parents in our building so they can see the growth their students are making in just a short amount of time.



Ryan Fedders
Taft Elementary Principal

Hello, Wildcat families! We had a tremendous Homecoming week at the elementary schools at the beginning of October. Our newly formed student leadership team, comprised of several fourth graders in our building, decided upon our dress-up days for the week, which had great student participation! These leaders also

helped to facilitate a community tour with Mr. Murray on October 15th; they have had a positive impact on our school so far! Our Homecoming week culminated in the parade Thursday evening and a high school student-led pep rally at Taft Friday morning. We are so grateful to have outstanding high school leaders to look up to from the elementary level!

Like many districts and buildings across the state, we've been navigating some changes in state laws as our year has begun. The first has been centered around student attendance. Laws were passed to target student absenteeism and truancy, but we received minimal guidance on carrying these laws out. We're fortunate to have great teamwork in our district, so our buildings have been able to ask questions and solve challenges collaboratively together to create cohesion in expectations for our students and families.

The second state law we've been navigating has centered around reading plans for K-6 students who aren't proficient on our screening assessments. Our team has been hard at work after receiving answers to a few key questions we had. Students who haven't met assessment benchmarks for two screening periods in a row must have a detailed plan entered into Panorama, the state student achievement database. These plans need to be updated and shared with parents over the course of the year. Our teachers will be prepared to share interventions that have already been implemented and student progress at conferences in the coming week. These are coming up on October 21st and 24th. We look forward to continuing our strong partnerships with families to continue to meet student needs together!

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 515-332-3216 or rfedders@humboldt.k12.ia.us