

Good Morning, ADM Parents –

I hope you are all having a great week following the Thanksgiving break!

Just a few things. . .

Winter Weather – Changes to School Schedule

We are now well into the winter weather season. . .and with that comes the potential for conditions that cause us to have to alter the school day by starting late, closing early, or cancelling school completely. These decisions are sometimes very clear cut and sometimes not, but the basic principles are based on keeping our students and staff safe.

Our ability to communicate changes to our schedule is greatly enhanced by our SchoolMessenger communication system that allows phone messages, email, and text messaging. Please ensure that your contact information is up to date in our Infinite Campus information system so you can get these emergency-types of messages as well as a great deal of non-emergency communications from buildings and the district. A recent email was sent out by our technology department on updating your information and signing up for the text messaging feature – if you need assistance, contact your child’s building office or the district office for assistance.

We know our parents highly value the SchoolMessenger system for ease and timeliness of school communications, especially in weather/safety types of situations.

Next Generation Technology Committee Starts Work

The Next Generation Technology committee, which includes district teachers, administrators, students, parents, and one board member, is working to develop a plan for our “second-generation” technology deployment. This work is timed to precede years 5-10 of the PPEL levy, wherein technology spending is not previously-allocated and would enable us to implement a vision for the next six years that closely reflects our current technology environment. The committee has begun its work by learning about different approaches to school technology in general, and reviewing our present reality. In the coming months, the committee will narrow down the list of available options based upon our current technology usage, needs, and potential areas for growth, and will visit districts that have previously-embraced some of those options in order to learn what has and has not worked in other places. By the spring, we will present a proposed plan that could guide our second generation of technology investment.

Attendance Center Rankings – Update

The Iowa Department of Education is continuing to roll out the “Attendance Center Ranking” system as required by the Iowa legislature in 2013 to develop a web-based tool for evaluating and ranking all public schools on certain measures (nine total). The

updated web site is not available for public viewing at this time. . .the DE is aiming for sometime in mid-December.

The attendance center rankings system is still under development and at the current time it represents the performance of each public school and district on two of the nine measures required by law:

1. Student proficiency rates: the percentage of students proficient in math and reading in grades 3-8 and 11 based on state assessment results.
2. Growth toward college and career readiness: the percentage of students who met a growth target needed to be college and career ready. This links the Iowa Assessments to the college readiness benchmarks defined by ACT.

The other seven measures are: attendance rates, parent involvement, employee turnover, community activities and involvement, grad rate, college readiness, and closing achievement gaps.

I will be sure to communicate out when the website is “live”.

Athletic Facility Improvements

At the November board meeting, the school board approved the athletic facility improvements in “Phase One” as listed in the master planning report. This work includes a new, wider track, a synthetic turf field, and new baseball and softball lights – all financed using the statewide sales tax revenue. The design work is in progress and the bid date is set for early February with construction to begin as soon as possible following the bids. Other improvements like new restrooms, concession stand, improvements to baseball and softball complexes are in phases for consideration after phase one begins.

The full report and supporting materials are located on our website.

Smarter Balanced New State Assessment – State Board Approves

The move away from Iowa Assessments to Smarter Balanced for our state-wide assessment continues with State Board approval. Below is a link to an update on the Iowa DE website if you are interested. This will start in the 2016-17 school year.

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/article/2015/11/18/state-board-education-votes-adopt-new-state-assessment>

Central Office Move – Set for Christmas Break

The work at the old MS is complete and the central office move over is set for the week of Christmas break. There are many advantages by having a central office location that includes the technology and maintenance department, improved meeting space for

curriculum and professional development, a dedicated board room, increased storage, etc. It is truly a beautiful space.

All central office employees will be at this new location: superintendent, superintendent's administrative assistant, business manager and all business office personnel, and district technology and maintenance staff.

There will be some growing pains associated with this change away from being located in the MS/HS campus, but as we continue to grow as a district, the needs will only increase. Thanks for your patience as we make the transition.

The middle school administration will transition to the current central office area over break once we are moved out, and then the activities department will move into the current middle school admin area. . .the dominoes continue to fall.

More information will be sent out to parents with reminders as we get closer to the move date.

Thank you for your partnership, and please call me with any comments, questions, or concerns.

Have a great day!

Greg