

## Here We Go

Here we go! The 2022-2023 school year has arrived. With each year, it seems as if time goes by faster. In many ways, it feels like students just departed for the summer break, but the school bells will be ringing soon. As the new school year comes closer, you can already feel the excitement!

Over the last couple of years, the school year was met with some unknowns and some items that were outside the control of educators. Although our country is in a volatile state, many of those items have dissipated and we are looking forward to getting back to teaching, learning, and providing students and the community with a valuable and meaningful educational service.

A few new staff members will meet students as the year begins. After working several years in the Grand Island school district, Ann Greving-Brown will be serving in role of Guidance for 7-12 students. Also joining our Elementary Staff from Grand Island will be Mindy Reibel. Haden Held is a first-year teacher from Leigh, Nebraska that will be teaching fourth grade. In the Special Education Department, Hunter Reeves from Gretna and Sydney Haubold of Grand Island will both be in their first year of teaching. These new staff members bring multiple positive characteristics to the District.

Student support programs and opportunities continue to be a focus for the District with homework hour, the after-school program, leadership, and additional programs. This year, and for one additional year, we will continue to implement a tutoring program across the District that will provide additional help to students in the areas of Math and Language Arts/Reading. This program will be paid for through ESSER III/ARP funds. This is an excellent service for students.

As the Nation moves beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, there will also be changes to the lunch program. In 2022-2023, the Federal Government has discontinued their waivers for free meals. Students and adults will once again be paying for breakfast and lunch. For those that qualify, free and reduced lunch applications can be completed and provided back to the District.

Construction on the Bison Activity Dome continues to progress. With any project, there are various issues that develop. Material delays and labor shortages have put the project a couple of months behind, but we will see the completion of the Dome in the very near future. We were very hopeful for the project to be completed by September, but we can safely answer that the project will be ready to be moved into by November 1<sup>st</sup> of this fall. Keep in mind, that until the project is completed and occupancy is granted, this facility cannot be utilized for student use or as a storm shelter. When complete, the Bison Activity Dome will be a remarkable addition to our District and community.

In a nation of discontent and media frenzy, it is very fitting that the District theme for this school year will be simply "Be Kind." The theme is simple and to the point, but a nice reminder for everyone to "Be Kind." In today's society, we often get caught up with opinions, social media, hate, dislike, and discomfort. We are lucky to live in rural Nebraska and to have the ability to avoid much of the unrest that encompasses our current society. Imagine how much better our nation could be right now if we could simply be kind and respect and care for those around us. It is an ugly world right now and kids are watching.

Our District will remain a district of traditions and values that focuses on doing the right thing for students. We must continue to stand for traditions that establish expectations, require respect, and focus on character and principles. If our community can work together to demonstrate positive personal characteristics, maybe we can influence positive change throughout our community and beyond. We must do everything we can to ensure that students are being provided with the foundation to be successful future adults. I hope that everyone enjoys the last few days of summer! Go Bison!!!