

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

In about a month the 2022-23 school year will begin, and in the next few weeks many high school activities will begin to resume, signifying the end of summer recess is soon to be upon us. While every summer is busy with many activities, it's always exciting to begin a new school year!

A reminder to all recipients of this newsletter, our annual all-school registration is scheduled to take place on Thursday, August 11, 2022, and will take place at Wisconsin Dells High School from 12pm to 6pm. The registration format will be very similar to years past, and you can expect more details via our social media channels as well as via email and phone messages for parents & caregivers. We look forward to seeing you on the 11th!

As the upcoming school year approaches, there are a few items that I wish to draw to your attention in advance of the school year. One of those is regular daily attendance. Certainly, the past two school years have presented a variety of pandemic-related challenges, but overall the District was extremely steadfast in keeping in-person learning moving forward. During this time, it has further reinforced those students who have exhibited regular attendance as well as being fully engaged in learning have demonstrated continued academic growth versus those who have demonstrated poor attendance patterns. Regular attendance is expected and will be a point of emphasis for the building principals. Specifically, last year roughly 20% of our student population missed more than 20% of the school year. In many cases, the students who exhibited more than 20% absenteeism struggled academically to gain ground as their peers who did demonstrate good attendance patterns, and as such the emphasis of not attending on a regular basis but to be fully engaged when in attendance. The overall goal for each school building is to exhibit better daily attendance. For your background information, the state average hovers around a 93% daily attendance rate. To meet this goal, a student needs to exhibit 12 or fewer absences on the school year. The final item I will mention in this section of the newsletter is Lake Delton Elementary Principal, Mr. Armijo, has provided an article on the benefits of good attendance patterns.

The state average daily student attendance rate is around 93%. To meet this goal, a student needs to exhibit 12 or fewer absences on the school year.

The second item I wish to introduce is our middle & high schools will be shifting to standards-based grading. At the middle school, this means students will no longer use the traditional A-F grading scale and will focus on students being required to demonstrate what standards they have mastered or are proficient at the end of each grading period. The high school will also make a move to this model but will utilize a conversion chart to replicate the more traditional A-F grading scale. Later in this newsletter, Mr. Whitehurst has provided a more detailed article, and both he and Mrs. Hoch will be spending time introducing the standards-based grading to students and their parents beginning at the start of the school year.

The third item that is specific to student learning is at the time of drafting this article in mid-July, the District has begun to receive its 2021-22 state assessment data. This data reveals areas of growth and areas where we will focus moving ahead into the new school year. Once again, it demonstrates the need to exhibit regular attendance as well as being engaged and committed to learning and growing as a student. Thus, the previous point of emphasis to correct and improve about 20% of our student population's attendance patterns. Specifically, the District's 4th and 5th grade students performed very

well, and this is extremely good news for our 5th grade team as this has been a focal point to make improvements at this district grade level the past couple of years! Well done students and staff! We look forward to sharing greater specifics on this data later in the beginning of the school year.

As I have done in previous newsletters, I will mention the District's continued work with its strategic plan. As we approach the 2022-23 school year, our goal is to live our mission statement of **Connect, Inspire, Achieve, Everyone, Every day!** These words will continue to be a part of our focus as staff and students return for the new school year. Since developing the initial multi-year strategic plan in June of 2016, our district has become much more focused on making continuous improvement in four core strategies and strategic objectives. Progress has been made in a variety of areas, and we know there is much work and opportunity for improvement that lies ahead, but it is reaffirming to see the District's focus improve because of constructing this plan almost six years ago. As a reminder, the strategic objectives consist of the following:

- **Student Growth and Achievement:** Use data-driven, culturally responsive instruction to improve K-12 literacy and to ready learners for colleges and careers.
- **Professional Growth and Leadership:** Enhance student learning and retain top talent by supporting creative implementation of high-impact instructional strategies and targeted professional development.
- **District and Community Engagement:** Connect with the community to promote our district and best serve our students and families.
- **Facilities, Finance, and Operations:** Implement a long-term plan that ensures safe, clean, and healthy facilities that foster multiple student learning pathways while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Finally, I will make further reference to the strategic objective of Facilities, Finance and Operations. Beginning in September, the District will most likely begin to disseminate a message about the need for an operational referendum. The District, in the past, structured the debt of the new high school in a manner that if passed this fall would likely have minimal to no mill rate impact. As I have mentioned in previous newsletters, the District spends about \$760 less per pupil than the state average, and with one-time ESSER monies set to expire as well as having limits on their usage, there is a need to resume this conversation in the near future. Additionally, the current state biennium budget allowed no per pupil revenue growth for the upcoming school year.

In closing, enjoy the month of August and the last few weeks of summer vacation and know that we are excited and preparing to begin what is going to be a busy, exciting and successful 2022-23 school year!

Terrance R. Shack
District Administrator