

## **We are ALL Longhorns**

**Promoting the PreK-12 Greater Educational Community – We are ALL Longhorns**

**There are many facets to serving as a Superintendent of Schools, and I have to say the vast majority of the work is wonderful as this unique position provides me the opportunity to engage with a variety of people of all ages and stages as we strive to provide our students the best educational experiences we are able to muster. On a given day, I might interact with a class of kindergarten students who are learning their letter sounds or have the privilege to assess in-class speeches delivered by sixth grade students or talk with high school students as they are moving from class to class. And, I love all of that! Also, though, I am blessed in that I get the chance to meet with and dialogue with staff members in all of our buildings and with people throughout our greater educational community. Regardless of where I go or with whom I have a conversation a true theme resonates and rings true: Ours is a community of people fully dedicated to our students and our mission to provide them with the educational experiences they deserve as they matriculate through our system. Said another way, “We are ALL Longhorns!”**

**There are many advantages to being a part of the Land of the Longhorns here in Holcomb. We are large enough to have the resources in people and materials to facilitate the learning taking place, yet we are small and intimate enough that we should be able to know the middle names of all of our people. This special circumstance really is an advantage as systems that are too large simply do not have the opportunity to get to know their students as well as we are able. This is important given our orientation to personalize the educational experiences of the students so as to speak to their passions and deep motivating interests. On the flip side of the coin, we ARE large enough to provide the students with opportunities smaller systems simply do not have the leisure of providing. They are hamstrung with the reality they are only able to provide the basics of the educational experience, and that is too bad for those students in those systems as I have always said “Our most important program we offer is EVERY program we offer.” Otherwise, we wouldn’t offer it. The fact that we have the means to offer a variety of classes and divergent activities to our students is a definite advantage as once again this sets us up for meeting the individual needs of each student.**

**Playing on the reality that we have a close-knit educational community, I am continually looking to explore situations where we are able to have the students of varying ages work together side-by-side. These sorts of situations are beneficial for all parties as the Little Longhorns get to engage with older students who are almost like heroes to them. This engagement promotes motivation for the younger students to work hard to be like the older students. These scenarios ALSO motivate the older students as they engage in a way that shows them to be true role models. This sort of arrangement provides the older Longhorns**

**with the scenario where they fully understand the impact they have on younger Longhorns and drives home the point of the importance of being deserving of the Little Longhorns looking up to them. This goes a long way with developing and reaffirming a person's self-worth and sense of making a difference in this world. THAT is a wonderful thing for our students to experience.**

**Specifically, we have several learning events taking place where the older students engage with the younger students. On multiple occasions throughout the school year, various high school student groups have worked with the younger students in ways that are both fun and educational. Older students have gone to the elementary schools to read to younger students, have made presentations to them on a variety of topics, and have served as positive examples to the younger students during various athletic competitions and artistic performances. Along with all of that, though, plans are being made to have both middle school and high school-aged students work with younger students as they make prepare for and then complete the construction of sandboxes at Wiley Elementary School and the Longhorn Learning Corral at Holcomb Elementary School. As progress is made on both of these initiatives, we will continue to celebrate the fact that we are ALL Longhorns, and I wouldn't have it any other way. J**