

WELCOME BACK!

It is with great pleasure I OFFICIALLY welcome you all back for another wondrous year of growth, learning and discovery. Whether this is the final year for a student at Holcomb High School before embarking on the rest of life's journey or if this year marks the initial steps of a student entering the pre-school, one thing is true: We are ALL Longhorns, and I couldn't be happier about that fact. Ours is a special place in the world – a place where EVERYONE belongs and we all work to make life a little bit better each and every day. ☺

Holcomb Schools has a proud tradition of striving to meet the needs of her clientele, and that dedication of spirit and flesh is definitely present today as we make final touches to the school facilities and learning environments so as to be prepared for the return of the students. As is the case EVERY summer, a great deal of work and effort has taken place so as to be as prepared as possible for when our students burst into the hallways on Wednesday the 21<sup>st</sup>. Upon arrival, students and their families will be met by a welcoming student-friendly educationally rich environment set up for the success of each and every student. You will be able to feel and see the differences present, and this is all very exciting to me.

While ensuring the learning environments are topnotch, this actually takes second seat to the TRULY important part of any school – the people. I am thrilled to be starting my second year as the Superintendent of the Holcomb Schools as my time here last year affirmed what I believed to be true before I joined the Land of the Longhorns. Our people are simply the BEST! They go out of their way to make sure every person in the greater educational community feels welcome and enjoys experiences that are personally meaningful and challenging. Toward that end, I am very proud of the fact we are bringing on several new faculty members who will be working with our students. Also I am proud of the fact MANY of our faculty members gave up some of their summer time with their families to continue with their own educational experiences so as to be able to provide for the students' needs. Specifically, many of the district's teachers either went to college this summer or attended a variety of workshops on various educational topics such as Project-Based Learning or Safety and Security here in the district. These efforts WILL DEFINITELY enhance the learning experiences of our students.

Along with all of this, upon returning to the school buildings, students and their families will discover a variety of construction projects all but complete that will enhance the learning environment and will also facilitate a safer experience for everyone involved. Also, though, people will discover we have launched a variety of actual programs that will benefit Longhorns, large and small. We are proud to “cut the ribbon” on our expanded Early Childhood programming in that we will be opening a brand-new Three Year Old Preschool and a Parents as Teachers program. Also, at the middle school we are pleased to be jumping into a technology-rich learning program that will engage students in a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) project that will have the students utilize technology in ways not previously used here in Holcomb; lastly, at the high school we are pleased to have expanded opportunities for the

students in our Career and Technical Education classes and in a deeper use of the Individualized Plans of Study that will help students set in a path that will lead them to realized success beyond the walls of our district. While all of this seems like a lot. Trust me, there is even MORE taking place. As the year progresses, I will be sure to highlight other initiatives taking place to benefit our students and families.

As you can easily see from this letter, this is an exciting time of the year to me. In all reality, the day the students return to school is my favorite time of the year as it allows me yet another opportunity to engage in my professional passion of working to provide the best educational experiences possible for the students of our district. And, to cap it all off, I get that opportunity right here in Holcomb, Kansas. All I can say is life is good. ☺