

May 20, 2022

Highland CUSD No. 5 Parents and Staff,

The end of the school year is just around the corner, but planning for the next is already happening. Before we start talking about the 22-23 school year, we need to reflect on this one. It was another great year with many challenges met by our students, teachers, staff and parents. We found ourselves once again dealing with COVID and staffing shortages, but made due to provide our students with a very close-to-normal academic year experience. Our students and staff are ready for a breather and need some time to get away and recharge those batteries.

I have some exciting things to share and some information that you may want. First of all, Highland High School's second consecutive outdoor graduation will be conducted tonight at 7 p.m. at the stadium. It hasn't been without stress throughout the week monitoring weather and setting up the field and having to watch a couple of storms come through to test the strength of the stage and chair setup☺ Dr. Becker and his team at HHS have been wonderful and determined to get our over 200 graduates the experience that they have earned over the last four years. We hope it turns into a wonderful ceremony tonight.

We would love to have you join us, but if you prefer to watch the live stream, here is the link:

<https://vimeo.com/event/2126686>

There is a very important referendum on the ballot on the June 28 election. I have provided presentations to many organizations throughout the community and received many positive comments. I know many stakeholders have not heard about our priorities or how we can address our top priorities without increasing the tax rates locally. The slides for the presentation are now available on the district website ([www.highlandcUSD5.org](http://www.highlandcUSD5.org)) under the "NEWS" tab and I encourage everyone who plans to vote to review the information and let me know if you have any questions. I am certainly available for groups of individuals interested in a Q and A type meeting. The slides demonstrate the paying off of current bonds making room for financing of a new primary school, addition to the Highland Middle School, and potentially a second gym at HHS if resources are enough. All revenues generated through the \$40 million in bonds would be allocated to ONLY these projects.

I want to thank all of you who completed the L.U.N.C.H. bunch survey a couple of months ago. It was reported that a record number of individuals have expressed interest in this summer program to provide food to our families. The following link will provide the 2022 Lunch Bunch schedule delivery sites and times: <https://5il.co/1auv4>. Thanks goes out to all the volunteers who assist in bringing this program to our families.

Above I mentioned staff shortages as one of the many challenges we have faced this year. While it is becoming more difficult to find candidates for our certified positions, it has become almost impossible to fill our endless vacancies in support staff, including custodians, program assistants, administrative assistants, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers. If you are interested in any of these opportunities, please reach out to our administration or go to our AppliTrack system to express interest. We contract with third parties for transportation and food service, but can direct you to the appropriate sources for those interests. The following link provides information on how to pursue interests in driving a school bus: <https://5il.co/1auv5>. Every person who plays a role in the school system is a vital part of what we do.

We need kids to arrive promptly and to be fed nutritionally before any learning can be expected. Thank you to all the support staff who provide endless efforts to give our educators the opportunity to teach our kids.

We have our regular May Board of Education meeting on Monday, May 23 at 7 p.m. If you wish to access the live stream of the meeting, please use the following link: <https://youtu.be/FE66wdAxLeI>. We can do this, one more week of school. Remember, the last day of school is a half day dismissal for a Teacher's Inservice. Have a great weekend!

Sincerely,

Michael S. Sutton, Superintendent