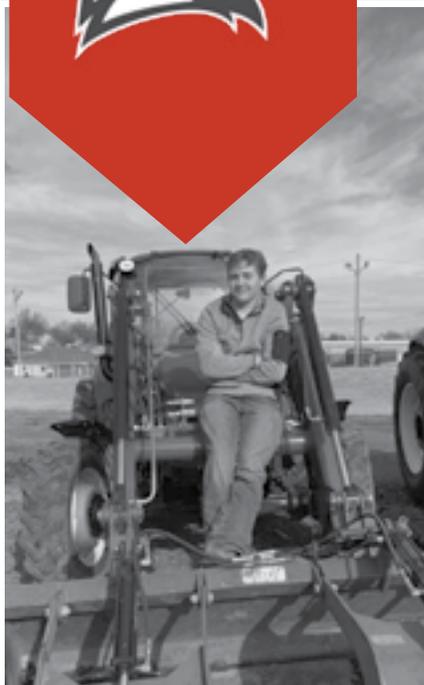


APRIL
2020



SCENE 415

A newsletter for the patrons of Hiawatha Schools.



National FFA Week wrapped up with Drive Your Tractor to School Day.

Hiawatha students enhance their education through FFA activities

Recently, cars were not the only vehicles in the Hiawatha High School parking lot, with farm equipment occupying some of the spots – for Drive Your Tractor School Day.

The event was part of National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Week, which also included chapter members wearing their FFA attire to school.

“National FFA Week is a time for members around the country to raise awareness about the organization and the importance of agricultural education,” said Ellen Blackwell, agriculture teacher and FFA adviser. “All of these events and competitions allow students to put their classroom knowledge into practice.”

FFA is open to students in the ninth through 12 grades and is the largest youth organization that promotes personal growth, leadership and career success through agricultural education. However, it’s not just for students who want to be

farmers – as members are also interested in becoming teachers, doctors, scientists and business owners.

“Hiawatha FFA is proud to have 65 members who participate in career development events, public speaking competitions, and attend state and national leadership conferences,” she said.

This year, members participated in dairy cattle, entomology, and nursery and landscape judging, as well as public speaking events. They also packaged and delivered meals to local farmers for harvest and volunteered at the Kansas Corn Biofuels Promotional Event at the Casey’s General Store in Seneca.

Freshman members attended the FFA Greenhand Conference, where they learned about the value of FFA and leadership skills. Eight FFA students also attended the four-day National FFA Convention and Expo in Indianapolis.

A LOOK INSIDE

Superintendent's message

Save the date

*Q & A with
USD 415 Board
President Ian
Schuetz*

Around the district

Superintendent's message

I hope this note finds you healthy and hopeful.

Our district and all schools around the state and country are going through a lot. It's a challenging time as we face complex and high-stake questions about how to protect our students, staff and families.

The long-term building closures – through the end of the school year – were carefully contemplated by our state officials and county health partners. And while classrooms may be empty, please rest assured our work on behalf of USD 415 students continues.

We have received guidance from the Kansas State Department of Education. Our trusted administrative and teacher leaders from around the district have worked together to finalize an instructional plan that includes a combination of online learning and packets of printed materials.

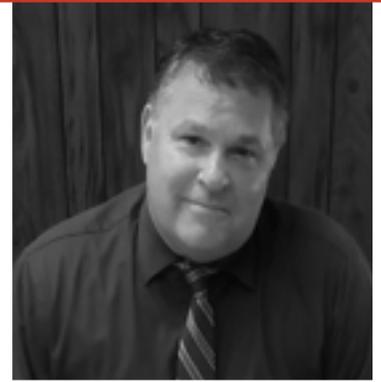
There are details on the district's website to answer several questions that have been asked. Here are a few featured informational items:

- Our educators will communicate frequently with parents and students in order to help ease some of the burdens they are facing.
- The Technology Department has worked with our families to distribute school-issued devices. Rainbow Communications kindly added several hot spots in our district boundaries to assist those who don't have internet access at home.
- Breakfast and lunch is being provided Monday through Friday to any person ages 1 to 18. Students must go in person to designated locations.
- All school-sponsored activities, events and spring sports have been canceled for the school year. These are all crucial parts of the school experience, and I am heartfelt in the loss many students will feel, especially our graduating seniors.

The district has the most up-to-date information on its website. Please check here regularly for updates: www.HiawathaSchools.org.

We know this is a trying time and the closure of our schools is a tremendous challenge for families. Please stick with us as we navigate this unpredictable and difficult situation. We thank you for your cooperation and patience. Together we will get through this!

Lonnie Moser, Superintendent



**SAVE
THE
DATE**

Through May 20 | Free Wi-Fi Hotspots

Thank you to Rainbow Communications for adding hotspots in our district boundaries. In Hiawatha, locations include the Rainbow Communications Office, 628 Oregon Street, and Morrill Public Library, 431 Oregon Street. Please stay in your vehicle when using the hotspots. For a complete list of locations, visit the district's website.



Q&A with USD 415 Board President Ian Schuetz

The strongest Boards have great leadership at the helm. And Hiawatha Schools USD 415 is no exception, with Board President Ian Schuetz leading the way. We recently chatted with Schuetz about a variety of topics.

Tell me a little about yourself.

I was born and raised in Hiawatha, and I graduated from Hiawatha High School (HHS) in 1999, like my parents before me. Most of my family has lived in the area for generations. I graduated from the University of Kansas in 2004, and I have worked for 15 years as a technical sales manager for R-Biopharm Inc. My wife, Christie, (also a HHS alumna) and I have two boys – Rafe, a fifth-grader, and Briar, a second-grader.

What is your past experience, roles, and years serving on the USD 415 Board? In what community activities or organizations have you been involved?

I have been a member of the Board of Education since 2013, when I was appointed to fill an open seat. I served as vice president for two years prior to becoming president in July 2018. I was a founding member of the Hiawatha ACES, a local nonprofit, and served as its president for several years, before stepping down in 2018. I also have served on several area civic committees.

What motivated you to want to become a Board member?

At the time of my appointment, both of my boys were very young. I knew the timing would afford me the greatest possible chance to have a positive impact on our district, while my boys were in school. Also, with our deep roots in the area, I felt being a part of the BOE would give me the chance to give back to the community we would call home for a long time to come.



What experiences or skills have prepared you to serve as a Board member?

Being part of the School Board is unlike any other experience I've had – and probably one of the most challenging. For my job, I am often tasked with complex problem-solving scenarios, and I believe that ability to tackle daunting issues has helped me. Also, coming from a science background has equipped me with an analytical way of looking at things, which I believe is beneficial in keeping an objective and open mind.

What do you see as the Board's roles and responsibilities?

A good School Board helps guide the district toward its goals and facilitates the work of its educators. We support our administration's efforts to meet state requirements, but we also explore ways to

Continued on back page.

Through May 20 | Meal Program

Any youth age 1 to 18 can receive a free breakfast and lunch from the district from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday through Friday, until May 20. Students must be present. Meal "drive-throughs" are located in many locations around the community. Visit the district website for those locations. Food items that are perishable will need to be consumed, refrigerated or thrown away within one hour of pickup for safety purposes.



Continued from page 3.

expand the opportunities available to our students. School Boards are accountable to their patrons and should serve as liaisons between the public and the district.

What are the current challenges facing education and/or School Boards?

Meeting the unique needs of each student and prudently providing for an ever-expanding list of skills they must learn is probably the biggest challenge any Board faces. We not only oversee the strategies that make this possible, but we are challenged with ensuring their implementation by maintaining top-quality teachers who can effectively teach the curriculum, while providing them with the resources to do so. USD 415 is blessed with many outstanding teachers who take our students' education seriously and work hard to see each child succeed. Responsibly funding the district is much more difficult. The Board

faces a constant, but necessary, balancing act of appropriating the finances needed to amply support our classes, facilities and employees, while being thrifty with the taxpayers' hard-earned money – which is not an easy task.

What is your vision for education in this community?

I envision our district as an institution where every student is provided with the resources they need to be successful and where we are assured that each graduate is prepared for what lies ahead for them. I believe engaging the support of our community is vital to this goal and feel that increased collaboration with and involvement of our patrons will facilitate an environment where education continues beyond the walls of the school building – truly embracing “whole child” development.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Mrs. Bannister's first-grade class enjoyed a fun week of celebrating Read Across America and the 120th day of school.



Junior Austin Coffelt goes in for a shot during the Hiawatha boys basketball substate game in March.

**Hiawatha Schools
USD 415**

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