

A “Normal” 2021-2022 School Year?

Many of us are looking forward to and hoping for a “normal” 2021-2022 school year. A few days from now, staff and students will begin to fill our hallways and classrooms once again. With each new year, there is a certain excitement that goes with it.

As this new school year starts, it is important to remember that the dismissal time has changed for the 2021-2022 school year. In previous years, the District had added considerable time to the day to address various concerns and needs. In doing so, Central City Public School students attended school an average of 15 minutes more than other regional districts and 25 to 30 minutes longer than some. Our students were in school for a considerable amount of time and had very long days. As the District has stabilized and addressed many of those needs, it is important to give that time back to our students and families and focus on efficiency throughout the day. This school year, the elementary will dismiss at 3:10pm, the middle school will dismiss at 3:25pm and the high school will have early release at 3:20pm and a 3:30pm final bell. After-school programs and other activities will adjust accordingly with the change.

A few new staff members will meet students as the year begins. The elementary will welcome Jana Rowe to the Bison staff. Mrs. Rowe brings many years of experience from Gretna. The middle school hallways will look a bit different with Julie Brandes now teaching 5th grade ELA after spending several years in the District as a full-time sub, Ashley Beckman teaching 6th grade ELA after several years of experience at Grand Island, and Kordell Hamer returning home to teach junior high social studies. Hannah Galusha will also return home and join the high school staff and teach English after teaching for several years in the Aurora District. These are wonderful individuals that bring considerable experience and expertise to Central City.

Student support programs and opportunities continue to be a focus for the District with homework hour, the after-school program, leadership, and additional programs. This year, and for the following two years, we will be implementing a tutoring program across the District that will provide additional help to students in the areas of Math and Language Arts/Reading. This program will be paid for through ESSER III/ARP funds. Additional information will be provided to eligible students and families in the near future.

Additional Federal dollars have also been utilized to continue to enhance the technology that is provided to our students. ESSER funds have been distributed to districts that can be utilized for specific purchases. In many cases, those funds are used to improve, upgrade, or provide additional technology to students. Central City Public Schools already provides Chromebooks to 7-12 students, and those students are allowed to take those devices home. This year, Chromebooks will be provided to 5th and 6th graders, but those devices will remain at school. The use of Chromebooks has been a cost savings to the District as we move away from expensive labs and

laptops and replace them with Chromebooks at a fraction of the cost. In addition, students benefit from having their own device and access to materials 24/7.

The pandemic has been a very difficult thing to manage and navigate through. Elements of that pandemic will continue to be present in this upcoming school year and for years ahead. Additionally, our society has entered a difficult era of politics, beliefs, and theories. The many difficulties of society today seem to be currently piling on top of each other. Despite the pressures and demands, our District will continue to stand by our students and do what is best for our students. We will also stand behind traditional values of teaching students to excel in math, science, English, and social studies, but to also be kind, compassionate, and strive to better themselves. We must do everything we can to ensure that students are being provided with the foundation to be successful future adults. I hope that everyone enjoys your last few days of summer! Go Bison!!!