

August 2011

Dear High School Faculty and Staff:

An enthusiastic hello to you all as I sit trying desperately to avoid the rampant humidity that is oozing through every inch of our community! I hope you've had a great summer and *continue* to do so until we see you in the last days of August! Some of you have trickled in at different points during the summer. The hallways have been considerably quieter with summer school happening at Longfellow this year. That has allowed Keith and his crack custodial team to get at readying the building for your return. Most of the building remains the same as when you saw it last; however, a couple parts will be hard to recognize as new fire exits, doors, paint, and tile have once again changed pieces of the landscape, in some cases significantly. Soon, it will all be ready for you!

As I typically do in this letter, I would like to introduce some new staff who will be joining us this fall. We welcome Kyle Eastman as our new choral educator, taking the place of Dwight Jilek who is on a two year leave. Kyle comes to us most recently from Sioux Falls, SD. Lara Runck will take over for Jill Hasley in the guidance office who will spend the year on child-care leave. Lara joins us after a stint in Le Sueur-Henderson. Eric Sandberg takes over in social studies for the newly-retired Scott Sahli. Eric hails from Delano and did his undergraduate work at St. Olaf. Finally, Virginia Kennedy is the newest member of our staff and will join the resource room staff in Special Education, replacing Cliff Casteel, who leaves for a teaching and coaching position in Owatonna. There are two additional positions that will be filled in August, and I will be able to introduce you to those individuals at our faculty meeting on the 30th.

Three quick notes for your attention:

- The systematic interventions team looks to continue our implementation of programs that work to improve student achievement and develop building-wide responses to students who struggle. This fall we will continue with structured study centers each hour of the day, and will add a seminar 10 for all students who have "graduated" from the 9th Grade Academy. Those students will not be in a looped section this year, but rather get some additional support via the seminar. The SIT will continue to look for ways that we can better help students who are academically at risk.
- I hope you are looking forward to the continued collaboration with your colleagues via the Wednesday late starts for PLC time. Please be thinking a bit about what goals you and your fellow collaborative team members might want to pursue in the coming year. Also consider any new staff that will join your team.
- As you know, Kim Slegers and Sarah Swan McDonald will continue in their roles as Cognitive Coaches this year, so please plan to take advantage of this incredible opportunity for individual staff development.

Regarding the start of school, teachers new to the district will report to the middle school the morning of *Monday, August 29th*, and spend that day getting 'up to speed' with many aspects of our school system. On *Tuesday, August 30th*, NHS faculty will report to the high school auditorium for our back-to-school faculty meeting and staff development activities. The afternoon is set aside for work in your rooms. *Wednesday, August 31st* is set aside for 3 hours of work time, and 4 hours of district level staff development activities. *Thursday, September 1st* begins with building staff development activities, with the afternoon set aside for additional work time.

I wish each of you a restful, enjoyable remainder of the summer break, and look forward to seeing new teachers on the *29th*, and all of you on the *30th*.

Sincerely,

Joel