

August 2012

Dear High School Faculty and Staff:

Last year I started this letter with a comment about how humid it had been at the time. I now realize that was nothing. *JULY 2012* was humidity. I hope you've had a great summer in spite of the heat and dew point, and *continue* to do so until we see you in the last days of August! Most of the building remains the same, physically, as when you saw it last, unless you wander into the gymnasium, where a new floor and other aesthetic changes are taking place that will dramatically change the look and functionality of that space. If you look *up* while on a walk through the building, you'll see a gaggle of ceiling-mounted devices that look like little spaceships. Those represent our district's commitment to the 21st century, and the world of wireless. Many of you have already received your iPads that will interact w/ those devices while at school, but soon all of our daily routines will be dramatically altered by this transformational technology. A new loading dock is also taking shape on the back side of the building, and new paint and tile in some rooms is changing the look of those spaces as well. 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 have a new counselor w/ a very familiar face—**Mark Ensrud** leaves his post in the English Department to join Kathy and Deb in guidance. Mark's vacancy in English will be filled by **Scott Stanina**, who joins us from Roseville High School. Also returning to the English Department is **Amy Moeller**, who leaves her post as Curriculum & Instruction TOSA, and will teach one section of American Literature, as well as Read 180 at the ALC. Charlie Black appears to have really retired this time, so **Kim Milne** will be taking his place in chemistry. Kim has experience teaching chemistry and AP chemistry, teaching most recently in the Lakeville schools. **Joni Karl**, who student taught with Paul Eddy this last fall, joins our math department part time. Three new staff join our special education department: **Joe Jorgensen** will be our new work-based learning coordinator replacing Dan Burns, **Stephanie Parlin** will be in our resource room area, as will **Elaine Harries**. Elaine and Stephanie take over for Virginia Kennedy and Patsy Ophaug. **Jacque Ims** returns as our school psychologist, switching places w/ Carrie Duba who moves to Longfellow this year; and finally, **Lori Rossmiller** returns to the Spanish department for a part-time position as well. Lori was here 3 years ago before taking a position at Emmaus Church.

A few specific items for your attention:

- If you haven't already done so, please complete the survey on school climate that was sent to you via email from the site council. We'll be using this information to inform fall inservices.
- Regarding the first day of workshops, we have some great activities planned that will have you moving around the building in groups. Please dress comfortably and bring a positive attitude!
- MEET THE TEACHER NIGHT this year is the evening of the very first day of school from 6:30-8:30, September 4th. Please mark your calendars for this event.
- 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. **Mary Hanson**, our new Director of Teaching & Learning, will be working closely with the team to further implementation of interventions and prepare us for the district's next stage of RTI implementation at the secondary level.
- Sarah Swan McDonald and Kim Slegers will continue in their role as Cognitive Coaches. Both received advanced training earlier this summer and are ready to assist the entire staff in any way they can. Chris Holmquist and Lisa Weis also completed the training earlier this year, so your opportunities to be coached are increased.
- For your information, August 21st from 12-6 is our annual Picture Day/Schedule Pickup in the auditorium. Feel free to stop over and feel the energy of this year's crop of high schoolers. We have plenty of parent volunteers helping out that day, but we'd love to have you stop in for a bit and visit w/ students old and new.

(over...)

Regarding the start of school, teachers new to the district will report to the middle school the morning of *Wednesday, August 22nd*, and spend that day getting 'up to speed'. On *Tuesday, August 28th*, NHS faculty will report to the high school for breakfast and staff development activities. The afternoon is set aside for dept. meetings and PLCs. *Wednesday, August 29th* is set aside for 2 hours of district level staff development activities and work time. *Thursday, August 30th* 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 *22nd*, and all of you on the *28th*.

Sincerely,

Joel