

April 30, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

As we near the end of another school year, let us not forget the great things our schools have accomplished. I would like to mention just a few.

**New School Openings – Completion of a \$21 Million Bond:** On October 2nd, many teachers and staff gave up a Saturday morning to move into our new Middle School. On November 6<sup>th</sup>, once again more district teachers and staff gave up their Saturday to move into the new ECDC building. Towards the end of December, and into Christmas break, the HS office staff moved into their new home. Also, during this same time period, our food service moved into their new, state of the art, kitchen and cafeteria. Finally, just this past month, Coach Merritt and Coach Mahan have relocated much of their equipment into the new HS Athletic Complex. Through these transitions, student learning has continued and very little disruption in school work has occurred.

**All-day Kindergarten:** Hugoton Schools for too long had been part of the 20% of Kansas schools that did not offer all-day Kindergarten. Last year, at this time, we learned the ECDC building construction would not be completed in time for the start of the 2010-2011 school year. The entire ES staff got together and problem solved. How could they make room for two more classrooms in a packed building of over 630 students? Well, the staff found a way to combine offices, use conference rooms as classrooms and even utilize foyer spaces for programs from August to November. Now our Pre K – Kindergarten is housed in one of the most unique and energy efficient early childhood centers in all of Kansas.

**Career and Technology Education CTE:** In grades 8 – 12, our MS and HS have made significant progress in developing career pathways. Students can now start the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, on one of four distinct pathways, which is akin to a college plan of study. This past Monday, a team of teachers traveled to Colby (a pioneer school district with CTE pathways) to further study their pathway programs. An approved pathway not only provides a more relevant and rigorous course of study, but it generates more FTE for a school district. The audited enrollment and funding of our CTE programs doubled in one year, going from 8.5 last school year to 17.1 in 2010-2011. This generated \$67,322.00 in our general fund this school year.

**MTSS Model:** The Primary School is in year two of MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) and our Intermediate School is in the structuring or developmental stage of MTSS. The professional collaboration and teacher leadership involved in this process has been quite impressive at both schools. Strong teacher leadership in both buildings has led to an innovative, Hugoton version, of MTSS that honors our core beliefs about how children best learn.

**Educational Technology:** In the last four years, we have greatly expanded the use of technology in the classroom by both teachers and students. In grades Pre K – 6 every classroom has a mimio, document camera and a ceiling mounted projector. Teachers are using Promethean software and student response systems to engage their learners. Many teachers in the Intermediate School and some in the Primary School have developed class web-sites that promote communication to the students and parents. Yes, recently the frustration has been high at the ES with some internet bandwidth issues. Mr. Gonzales has plans for a summer infrastructure overhaul to remedy this issue to provide 21<sup>st</sup> century connectivity speed and access. Already, Mr. Gonzales has added a secure wireless internet system in the entire ECDC and also in the 1<sup>st</sup> grade wing. Finally, a new computer lab in the old Kindergarten classroom has been a nice addition.

**Hugoton Learning Academy:** Before school began, the HLA had calculated the number of students we would need in the HLA to fund the salaries and operating expense of this new school. In the first days of August, we were excited about an increase in enrollment from the previous school year. Then, the great news came in late August that the state came through on a second year of a federal charter school grant. This

was a grant in the amount of \$195,000.00. This school year, the enrollment of the HLA continues to grow. If you count Adult ESL classes and all the virtual students, there are 90 students total. The September 20<sup>th</sup> count for this building, not counting the grant money, more than paid for all the salaries of the school's personnel.

**Professional Learning Communities (PLC) in all buildings:** Prior to this school year, all our schools had PLC's in place except the high school. Mr. Schnable empowered three teacher leaders and gave them the reins to conduct late starts for most Wednesday's during the second semester. Mrs. Chelle Leininger, Mrs. Dettra Crawford and Mrs. Judy Waters gave above and beyond the call of duty to lead, not only in PLC training time, but also in the facilitation of a new schedule and new course offerings. Much professional collaboration progress and a shared vision in each building now exist.

During this week of Teacher Appreciation, let's not forget the great things we have accomplished during the 2010-2011 school year. Thank you teachers, staff and administration for the progress and leadership you all have provided.

Sincerely,

*Mark K. Crawford*

Superintendent of Schools