



MONTHLY MESSAGE

from Mr. Howard

Greetings from the Union Community School District! Greetings from the Union Community School District! Please find below the stakeholder communication for April 2023.

CALENDAR UPDATE

The Union Community School District Board of Education gave approval for the following, related to the 2022-2023 school calendar, at the March meeting:

- **The last student day will remain Wednesday, May 31st, 11:00 a.m dismissal.**
- **The last staff day will be Friday, June 2nd, 12:00 p.m.**

I want to thank the board for addressing this calendar decision in a positive and timely manner.

IOWA STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS (ISASP)

Sometime during the dates of Monday, April 10th through Friday, April 28th, all Union Community School District 3rd-11th grade students will take tests in reading, math, and language/writing known as the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP). Students in 5th, 8th, and 10th grades will also take a science assessment. These online assessments, developed by Iowa Testing Programs at the University of Iowa and supported by Pearson, are aligned with the Iowa Core Standards and will report student growth, proficiency, and readiness indicators with the goal/purpose being to obtain a broad picture of a student's progress. We certainly hope all students will do their best on the ISASP, and we can celebrate some improved scores not only in certain grade levels or individual buildings but also across the entire district.

TRANSITIONAL KINDERGARTEN (TK)

If you have not already heard or seen on social media, beginning this fall, we are expanding transitional kindergarten (TK) from half-day to full-day at La Porte City Elementary. Students will attend class according to the La Porte City Elementary daily schedule, and the program will follow the Union Community School District 2023-2024 academic calendar. By extending to a full-day, these students will have more instructional time, be able to participate in additional center-based learning and possibly improve their social skills, which will increase their probability of success during the year and going forward. The district is very excited about this change, and we hope all stakeholders are as well.

WHY UNION?

In the coming weeks, some staff, students and parents/guardians will be asked this question– Why Union? The idea is for these individuals to communicate the positives of our district and subsequently for us (as a district) to market the responses in/through different means. Not only will these statements be uplifting but will also help in our continuous goal of recruiting/retaining students and staff.

WELLNESS CHALLENGES

One activity we started in January was a staff monthly Wellness Challenges. These challenges have been extremely popular with 50-60 staff members participating each month. Our January one focused on weight loss (272 total lbs. lost by participants) while the last three– February, March and April– have all been based on a daily action to improve one's health. Some examples include– no snacks, eating fruits and vegetables, drinking more water, no caffeine, taking 10,000 or more steps, taking time for oneself, calling a friend, and more. I want to thank our Wellness Challenge Committee for their creativity and support in making these challenges difficult but fun.



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SUMMER SCHOOL

Mr. Parker and Mr. Weber are finalizing all the information regarding summer school for elementary students. I would expect detailed communication to come out later this month or early in May.

SPRING SPORTS

Spring sports have started. I am anxious to see our teams' successes in golf, tennis, track and soccer. Now, let's hope the weather begins to cooperate.

PERSONNEL

Mr. Parker and Mr. Weber are finalizing all the information regarding summer school for elementary students. I would expect detailed communication to come out later this month or early in May.

We had another terrific month in the Union Community School District. It truly is a privilege to lead such tremendous staff and students!

New Year, New UNION! Go Knights!

Sincerely,
John Howard, Superintendent