



## Union Community School District

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#UKnighted

**“Education to Meet Tomorrow’s Challenges”**

Greetings from the Union Community School District! I hope everyone had an enjoyable, safe holiday season. Honestly, it is really hard to believe that the 2023-2024 school year is half over, but January 2024 does mark the half-way point. Please find below the stakeholder communication for this month.

### **School Calendar 2024-2025**

The district calendar committee, composed of staff at all buildings, met last month and will meet again late this month. I have been very impressed with the committee’s desire to formulate the best calendar. The goal is to have an option for the board of education to approve at the February 2024 board meeting. If you, as a stakeholder of the Union Community School District, have suggestions/thoughts for the committee, please e-mail me at [j\\_howard@union.k12.ia.us](mailto:j_howard@union.k12.ia.us). We would welcome your input.

### **Volunteers Needed– Speech Contest**

We are still in need of volunteers for the District Large Group Speech Contest at Union High School on Saturday, January 20, 2024. These individuals (approximately 20 adults) for room chairs, time keepers, and additional tasks that may be needed at the contest (runners, concession, judges lunch, etc.). If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Stephania Sauer at 319-342-2697 or email [s\\_sauer@union.k12.ia.us](mailto:s_sauer@union.k12.ia.us).

### **Mentors**

I want to publicly thank our teacher/counselor mentors who are working with our 1st and 2nd year certified staff. These individuals do a fantastic job of helping our district’s “newbies” throughout the year. Due to the terrific work of these individuals, and many before them, our certified staff retention rate is one of the best in the state of Iowa!

### **Winter Weather Decisions**

Unfortunately, we are approaching the time where the district will have to make decisions regarding winter weather. Below you will find some important information. Please know our #1 priority is student and staff safety.

- Timing
  - Our goal is to make a decision between 5:30 a.m./5:45 a.m. There could also be times that we make the decision the night before due to the forecasted weather.
    - Note: We may first communicate a two-hour late start and then cancel school due to worsening conditions.
- Communication
  - We will send something on Iowa School Alerts and JMC as well as alert the appropriate radio and television stations and post on social media.
    - Note: Please don’t call the district/school offices unless absolutely necessary.
- District Considerations
  - Due to the area/size of the district, there may be times when we have a late start/early dismissal or cancel due to conditions occurring in only a part of the district, not necessarily the entire district.

- Wind Chill
  - If there is a **windchill warning**, we would delay or cancel school. If it is a windchill advisory, we will plan to have school on time, barring any district transportation or other weather issues. Please plan accordingly.
- Activities
  - If school is canceled, but conditions improve enough throughout the day, HS practices/games/etc. may be held at the discretion of the AD and superintendent. Coaches/sponsors have been made aware of all expectations associated with practices, rehearsals, scrimmages, etc.
    - Note: Travel will be a significant consideration when making this decision.
    - Note #2: There are no JH practices/games/etc if school is canceled.
  - If school is dismissed early, due to inclement weather, no district sponsored activities may be held— contests, open gyms, practices, rehearsals, scrimmages are to be held. State association (IAHSAA, IGSAU, IHSSA) sponsored activities may be held in this situation, but only if mandated by the sponsoring association.

### **CSTAG Workshop**

On December 18, 2023, some staff attended a Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) workshop at Central Rivers AEA. This evidence-based, problem-solving approach will allow administrators, and perhaps other staff members and community personnel, to better assess and possibly intervene on any threat. All buildings will now use this process with the ultimate goal of continuing to keep our staff and students safe.

### **Winter Activities**

The winter activity season has, once again, started off well. Each of our activities is experiencing success. We, as a district, are extremely lucky to have participants, coaches/sponsors, community members and volunteers who devote countless hours to these programs. Without everyone's help, we would not have our positive results. I am so proud of all of them!

### **Future No School/Early Out Days**

January 15th- No School- Professional Development

January 24th- 1:00 p.m. Dismissal- Professional Development

February 12th- No School- Professional Development

February 20th and 22nd- 1:00 p.m. Dismissal- PT Conferences (note change in dismissal time from original calendar)

February 23rd- No School- Teacher Comp Day

Thank you for your continued support of our district. Go Knights!

John Howard, Superintendent