

September 5, 2024

## Parkview Blog – Start of the 2024-2025 School Year

Students arrived today for the start of the 2024-2025 school year. The first day is always filled with excitement and anticipation. Students are looking forwards to meeting their friends and teachers and getting back into a regular routine. At the Elementary School our youngest students were being given tours around the building and meeting special people they should know like the school secretaries, the food service staff, the custodians and the school nurse. They are energized to move forward on their learning process and looking forward to learning. At the Junior/Senior High School, the students were greeted by staff wearing blue t-shirts with the statement “Believe”. This is the theme for the school year. The administration and staff want to let the students know that “if you believe it is possible, it is possible.” As a District, we “believe” in the potential of our students, staff and community. We “believe” that working together great things can be accomplished this year.

Last week our staff came back to prepare for the new school year. The opening day started off with a welcome by Mr. Knutson, our School Board President. Mr. Knutson expressed to the staff how important they were to the success of the District, how the Board was there to support them and how invested he and all of his fellow Board members were in the success of the District. He acknowledge that the Board has several very important tasks in front of them – one being finding a new superintendent to lead the District at the start of the 2025-2026 school year. He informed the staff that the Board is interviewing superintendent search firms in September.

Once he was finished, I had the opportunity to talk to the staff and tell them my thoughts, hopes and expectations for the upcoming year. I must admit that I still get nervous doing this, even after twenty-nine years, but I also have a tremendous sense of excitement each time I get to interact with the people who make school a special place to work and learn. I let the staff know that my internal feelings are much like when I used to get ready for a race, my stomach would turn in knots up until the gun went off and then once the race was started all my butterflies went away. When I speak in public, it is much the same, I get all sorts of butterflies until I start to speak and then they go away.

During my talk with the staff, I wanted to remind them of the impact that each and every one of them has on the students that enter our building each day. Each of our jobs are important for the mission of the school to be accomplished – my role as superintendent is not any more important than anyone else’s role in the District – it is just a different role. If everyone does their role to the best of their ability – then the District will move forward and accomplish great things for our students and community. If not, then our progress will be limited.

I feel so bad when someone makes the statement, “I’m just a (bus driver, secretary, custodian, food service personnel, educational assistant, coach/advisor, teacher, principal, superintendent or board member).” As I mentioned above, all of our roles are important and necessary for the Parkview School District to move forward. I reminded the staff that many of went into the field of education because a school employee took an interest in us and our life and inspired us to go into a field that we could have that same impact on others.

I wish our bus drivers could have attended our opening presentation because it would have given me the chance to remind them that they are the very first and last people that many of our children will see each day. If they greet the child with a smile and friendly good morning, this simple action can brighten the start of their day. If when the students are getting off the bus they wish them a good night, it might take the edge off of any negative thing that might have happened during the day. During breakfast and the middle of the day as our students eat breakfast and lunch, our food service personnel create nutritious meals for our students to give them the energy they need for their studies and activities. If they serve the meal with a smile, it makes the meal that much more tasty and meaningful. The maintenance workers and custodians always seemed to be around to help us when our lockers wouldn't work or we accidentally spilled something and they always seemed to be interested in how we were doing both in school and in our co-curricular activities. The secretaries were the people we went to when we really needed help and they knew just how to help us. Teachers and our support staff were not only our instructors, but they also served as our mentors. I remember one of my seventh grade teachers Mr. Anderson (no relation) who felt that I should pursue a career in oceanography because he felt that this is where some of our great future needs would be addressed. I never went into the field, but I never forgot the interest that he played in my life.

During my opening address, I also brought up the importance of the administrative team and School Board. The District could not move forward without their leadership and dedication. I said the one person, who I did not think had much of an impact on me while I was a student was the superintendent. I knew little about him, except that his son was a basketball player and they seemed to get new uniforms each year and the wrestlers (I was a wrestler) seemed to always be forgotten. When I became a superintendent, I made a vow to myself that the students would at least know who I was, even if they did not know exactly what my role was in the school system.

I cannot stress enough – WE ARE ALL IMPORTANT. We also need to show by our words and actions that we care for each and every one of the children that pass through our doors – they need us and we need them. I 'Believe' in the power of people to make a difference. I "Believe" that the best days are in front of us and that by working together we can do great things for our students and community. Finally, I "Believe" in each and every one of you. Thank you for letting me finish my career in such a caring place.