

# Welcome to Kennedy High School



## *Invested in Every Student*

July 2017

### *Dear Kennedy Families,*

Time flies when you are having fun, and I hope your summer has been enjoyable. I know for our students, receiving the back-to-school mailer is not a good sign of things to come, but I suspect parents may feel differently. In any event, school starts back up on August 23rd!

This year we again were honored by the national ranking organizations by being included on their lists of best high schools. We were pleased to be on the Belin-Blank Iowa AP list as well. As we move forward with College and Career Readiness initiatives, our placement on these lists will become less likely. Offering more pathways to students means students choosing fewer courses that these lists count (specifically, AP classes) for school success. I do not believe this change will indicate that the quality of our school has declined but I wanted you to be aware of this upcoming shift.

As we focus on change for next year, there is a lot of good news:

- **Bell Schedule:** We will keep the same bell schedule next year, starting at 7:50 and ending at 3:00 with seven class periods. We will continue to have **SMART Time** following second period.
- **Clinic:** Our school clinic is becoming a Metro Care Connection clinic and will be staffed by a full-time Nurse Practitioner, **Jill Asprey**. This is a wonderful opportunity for our school community!
- **Counseling:** The district has restored our 5<sup>th</sup> Counseling position that was reduced three years ago! We are thrilled to welcome **Tracie Guenther-Yoke** back to Kennedy. Tracie has held a number of teaching and counseling roles in the district, the last of which she oversaw the development of the District's College and Career Readiness plan.
- **College and Career Readiness:** You will note an increase in our focus and activity around planning for your child's future. The district has added the K-Navigator system, which will allow students to begin planning in middle school. It offers great features such as interest and career batteries, a portfolio module, planning tools and more. We will be infusing this and other planning activities into our curriculum at all grade levels.
- **Attendance:** We will be revamping our attendance policies for this year. With a significant dip in the student attendance rate last year, I felt it is time to look at our practices and find new ways to help students be in school. We will have additional staffing and resources dedicated to supporting a high attendance rate every day. We all must work together to ensure strong daily attendance is a routine for all students!

- **Classroom Learning:** Our teachers are implementing the **Standards-Based Learning** framework in all classes next year. The goal is to create a common classroom expectation throughout the building so that all students will be able to identify which priority standards they are currently engaged in and articulate where they are on the progression of achievement regarding those standards. There is strong evidence that the more students understand what they are supposed to be able to do and know, and the more they are able to identify whether they have achieved mastery of those things, the more successful they are at learning.
- **Immunizations:** This is a very important thing for ALL rising seniors. The law has changed: Iowa now requires a one-time dose of meningococcal (A, C, W, Y) vaccine received on or after 10 years of age for applicants in grades 7 and above, if born after September 15, 2004; **and 2 doses of meningococcal (A, C, W, Y) vaccines for applicants in grade 12, if born after September 15, 1999; or 1 dose if received when applicants are 16 years of age or older.** This must be resolved before students start school on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. More info: [https://idph.iowa.gov/immtb/immunization/laws\\_12th\\_Grade\\_Immunization\\_Requirement.pdf](https://idph.iowa.gov/immtb/immunization/laws_12th_Grade_Immunization_Requirement.pdf)
- **Staffing:** We are, to this point, fully staffed! We had very little turnover and only one retirement this year. I will be announcing new hires on our [Facebook](#) page this summer, but here are the names of our newest staff:
  - Alyssa Jacobson, Science
  - Paul Barnard, Science
  - Jake Hemann, CTE
  - Emily Remininsky, Math
  - Chanelle Thomas, Learning Supports
  - Jill Asprey, Clinic Nurse
  - Tracie Guenther-Yoke, Counseling

Over the summer, our PTSA (Parent-Teacher-Student Association) has been working hard to identify ways they can help make Kennedy an even better school. Please be on the lookout for information from them. You can make a huge difference at Kennedy through our PTSA! Every family is asked to join the PTSA to support their mission in improving Kennedy.

Sincerely,



Jason Kline  
Principal