

Dear Washoe County School District Family,

Welcome back for the 2019-2020 school year! It's going to be an exciting day filled with promise and plans for another successful year of learning and growing. I know we've all been looking forward to this special day.

I began my day before dawn at Nutrition Services, thanking our staff members who provide nutritious meals every day for our students and staff members. They work hard to ensure everyone is fed, and for them, that means preparing nearly 50,000 meals every day.

From there, I will join with other team members as we break into groups and visit every school in our district. This hands-on support has become an important focus for us on the first day of school because it enables us to immediately address concerns. It also offers us the opportunity to touch base and make sure principals, teachers, staff members, and students have the supports and resources they need to make this a great and memorable school year. The leadership team and I will meet each afternoon this week to go over our notes and ensure that any first-week glitches are resolved right away.

Today is truly an historic day for our District, as we open three brand-new schools. Desert Skies Middle School, Sky Ranch Middle School, and Nick Poulakidas Elementary School will provide state-of-the-art technology and instruction tools for our students and staff members, and will help alleviate critical overcrowding at a number of our schools. Congratulations to our Capital Projects staff members who oversaw the construction of these schools, which were completed on schedule and in time for the new school year.

I also want to offer my heartfelt congratulations to our newest high school graduates who completed their requirements and participated in last week's summer graduation ceremonies. Forty-two students finished their work over the summer and were awarded their diplomas, and it was inspiring to watch them cross the graduation stage. I know they faced challenges and obstacles while achieving their academic goals, but they persevered, and I am proud of them and their families.

I would like to tell you more about a project I've been working on which I presented to the Board of Trustees during a public work session last week. My 30/60/90 day plan— now called "A Pathway to Positive Progress for the WCSD"— provides solid direction for how we will work together to tackle challenges that lie ahead. Those challenges include low morale among our employees, special education support and services to schools, teacher/principal workloads, pay and benefits for employees, Informational Technology and equity, and class sizes/allocations. I am excited to share the plan with you and I hope you'll take a moment to review it [here](#).

A key part of a Pathway to Positive Progress is to expand and improve my communication with employees, associations, task forces, and other stakeholders. I firmly believe that when we share our thoughts and ideas in a meaningful way, we can work together more effectively on behalf of our students, their families, and our community. Whether we share information via surveys, phone calls, emails, meetings, or casual conversations in our workplaces, it's vital that we continue to communicate candidly and honestly— especially when those conversations are difficult.

Please remember that the Pathway to Positive Progress is a living, constantly-evolving document, and as challenges arise, our strategies and plans may change. I will work closely with the Board of Trustees over the coming months to ensure we are all working together. I rely on you to communicate with me when you have concerns or questions about our direction and goals. You can always email me directly at kmcneill@washoeschools.net.

Let's work together to find solutions to the challenges we are facing while we continue to embrace the integrity, honesty, and kindness that are so crucial to our work.

To participate in an anonymous survey, please visit this [page](#).

I'd also like to inform you that the Reno Aces will hold a Back to School Night for all WCSD employees at 7:05 p.m. this Friday, Aug 16. Game tickets will be offered at a discounted rate. Get your tickets [here](#).

Once again, my warmest welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! I hope you have a wonderful day.

With excitement and deep appreciation,

Kristen
Interim Superintendent
kmcneill@washoeschools.net
789-4645