

Dear WCSD Family,

As we move to the end of the third quarter of this academic year, our schools are working on a variety of ways in which to support students to ensure academic, social, and emotional recovery. As discussed at the Board Meeting on February 23, these measures include spring intersession, summer enrichment and credit recovery programs, after-school tutoring, advisory classes, and the all-important family engagement and communication with teachers and school staff. We are committed to remaining transparent with our District family and the community. All across our District, staff members are working hard to help our students overcome challenges, and I look forward to continuing to work collectively as we move ahead.

At a Board Work Session last week, the Board also discussed next year's budget, and the outlook is uncertain at best. Our CFO Mark Mathers, Budget Director Jeff Bozzo, and our Leadership Team are working with the governor's recommended budget and Pupil Centered Funding Model to develop a proposed budget to take to our Board of Trustees. We will also be developing plans with input from our schools and school communities on the use of CARES Act federal monies that will soon be coming to our District. I want to acknowledge the work of the Teaching and Learning Committee as they also help and guide this work. These will be ongoing conversations with our Board as we work to minimize any impact on our classrooms as much as possible and discuss targeted uses of federal dollars for academic, social, and emotional recovery for our students and staff.

On Friday, we had our February "Lead Teach Learn" (LTL) meeting with our principals and Central Service administration. During this LTL, students from Incline High School, Hug High School, and Damonte Ranch High School shared their voices regarding equity and inclusion. We also heard an inspiring message from Director of Equity and Diversity Tiffany Young. This message is important as we continue our individual and collective journeys through our work on inclusion, equity, and celebration of our students' and staff members' diversity. We also heard from Education Alliance Executive Director Kendall Inskip regarding the upcoming televised special on the Ed Alliance and the Partner in Education Awards. A critical component of this LTL was the continued work with Dr. Keating and Professional Learning Communities, and the focus this time was District and School Leadership in the PLC process.

We were disappointed to learn of the latest decision by the Washoe County Commission last week regarding the County's overpayment of tax funds to the Washoe County School District nearly 15 years ago. Commissioners voted unanimously that all entities—including WCSD—which received funds due to the County's error must pay back the money (plus interest) to the residents of Incline Village. For WCSD, that is nearly \$20 million. This settlement was agreed to by Washoe County, not WCSD, and we are pursuing every legal option available to advocate for our students, families, and staff members. I will be sure to keep you posted.

This week, we begin to hold athletic events on our campuses, and I know we're all excited to see our students participating in these activities for the first time this school year. There are strict guidelines in place that have been set down by the state and the NIAA, and we are complying fully with these guidelines. Some of the most stringent rules involve the maximum number of spectators – initially capped at 100 – allowed in our gyms, stadiums, and on our fields. We have

put together [a Fact Sheet](#) regarding athletics and spectators at our upcoming games and issued a Connect Ed call this past weekend to our high school families.

The Nevada Department of Education has released a comprehensive report detailing the many ways in which the state has supported students and educators across the state during the pandemic, as well as current efforts to provide safe access to in-person education. Over the past year, the state has: provided more than 4.5 million items of PPE to schools; successfully applied for—and was one of only five states to receive—federal funding for school-based mental health services; and connected every K-12 student participating in Distance Learning with at-home access to the internet and a computer. For more information on these outstanding efforts to provide for our students and staff members, [please click here](#).

Over the weekend, hundreds of our employees were able to receive their second COVID vaccines at the Livestock Events Center and at our Points of Distribution (PODs) at North Valleys High School and Reed High School. All of these events ran smoothly, and each of our 9,822 employees has received invitations to get vaccines. We are greatly encouraged by the turnout of employees, and grateful to all who have made these PODs possible. Going forward, vaccines will be administered at the Livestock Events Center to our employees, and our Human Resources Department will continue to follow up with employees to schedule these.

[Nevada Reading Week](#) begins today! There will be plenty of observances at schools this week as we celebrate the joys of literacy, and I will join [members of our Leadership Team](#) in reading books to our students via video. Gov. Sisolak is also planning to visit at midweek to read to some of our students. As we all know, literacy opens so many doors for our students. I am grateful for all of our educators who teach this essential skill in a multitude of ways to our students and encourage them to pursue it as part of a lifetime of learning and growing.

Last Friday, we celebrated the [Topping Out at the new Procter Hug High School](#) campus. Guests had the opportunity to sign the beam that was “flown” to the top of the building, and toured the new, state-of-the-art education space that will open in fall of 2022. This space will feature a three-story building that will include: 40 general learning rooms; 11 science labs; 15 shared group rooms; 17 specialized labs for art, media, and career tech; a student commons; a 425-seat performing arts center; music suites, two gymnasiums; and a JROTC room. What a wonderful chance to see the great progress builders are making on this amazing school. A very special thank you to our Capital Projects Department and our contractors for making this building a reality for thousands of deserving students.

There’s plenty of good news to report this week, and I hope you’ll send along your submissions to [goodnews@washoeschools.net](mailto:goodnews@washoeschools.net):

As we have launched Distance Learning across our District, it’s been so important for educators to listen to and learn from each other. Teachers are sharing their experiences on Teacher Communities in Microsoft Teams. Every two weeks, the 21st Century Learning Division posts a Community Challenge in the Teacher Communities. Many of these challenges focus on Distance Learning and ask teachers to share their success stories. Use these links to view the [Elementary](#) and [Secondary](#) stories that have been submitted via Flipgrid. More successes

have also been shared via Padlet, and you can view those [here](#) and [here](#). Teacher Communities are available for all grade levels and subject areas Pre K-12. I encourage all District employees to join any or all of the Teacher Communities. Codes to join are available [here](#).



The Nevada Association for Positive Behavior Support has bestowed its “Diamond Award” for excellence in PBIS implementation on Kate Smith Elementary School! This is the highest possible honor awarded to schools, and it recognizes staff members for their outstanding efforts in realigning their PBIS system to meet CDC/WCSD guidelines to provide a sense of safety, security, and belonging for their staff and students. Congratulations to everyone at Kate Smith ES for their wonderful work.

Stephen Martin, a science teacher at Damonte Ranch High School, and Erik Conkey, a science teacher at North Valleys High School, have been selected to serve as 2021 NASA



Airborne Astronomy Ambassadors (AAA)! This is an elite professional development program for science teachers designed to improve science teaching and increase student learning and STEM engagement. Erik and Stephen will attend a weeklong STEM immersion experience at a NASA astronomy research facility and then teach a physical science curriculum module created by the SETI Institute. Just 30 teachers in 10 states were selected for this honor, and two of them come from WCSD! I am so excited for these remarkable educators and their students.



Take care,  
Kristen

