

Normally I do my first article in September for the new school year. However, I am so excited about this year I decided to make my first article in August. We have accomplished so much over the summer it is exciting to see the kids and staff back in full swing in our schools.

An item that was really exciting for our parents and relatives that came for enrollment was a major fee reduction this year. We reduced school fees by about 50% this year for most all buildings. We were able to do this because a number of our textbook adoptions have been electronic with our 1 to 1 laptop initiative in many of our classes at BHS and some at BMS. Electronic textbooks are less expensive than purchasing traditional textbooks. This helps many of our families, especially those with multiple kids attending school.

Another positive is we were able to reduce the mill levy this budget year by 0.084 mills. Whenever you can have a mill levy equal to or less than the previous year, it is a really good thing. This mill levy is one of the lowest in Kansas. We are so appreciative of the public supporting the one mill for five years proposal we put forth my first year in Burlington. What we have done to our science rooms at BHS and BMS is nothing short of amazing. The teachers and students have a first class learning environment. Our BHS Gym Open House will be on September 13th before our first home football game. We are so excited to show this off! Not only is it our competition gym, but also a learning environment, and public facility for the many different events we host such as the Burlington Craft Fair, Lyon-Coffey Electric dinner, and alumni events. I think the public will be very pleased with the improvements we have made.

Other improvements we have made in the district have been those recommended by our staff to help improve our facilities. We have constructed permanent walls in classrooms that are much more sound proof at BHS and BMS. We have done flooring improvements (carpet, tile, and epoxy floors) at all buildings. We have had painting projects and ceiling tile replacement in our buildings. The BES cafeteria had acoustic panels installed in the cafeteria to help with noise reduction during breakfast, lunch, and learning activities throughout the day. We have replaced and added concrete throughout the district.

We have a new College and Career Advocate at BHS. Taylor Kigerl-Hill is our new CCA. She will work with our high school students and parents to help better prepare our students for life after graduation. Post high school life is so important now to make sure our students get going in the right direction. We are excited about Taylor working with our staff, students, and families to help guide them into a productive future.

Another program we have started is our BRIDGES program through our Coffey County Special Education Co-Operative. Our co-op serves all of the schools in Coffey County, and we created BRIDGES to help serve our students ages 18-21 to help them better prepare for life after high school. It is truly a bridge between high school and adulthood. Our program will focus on partnerships with local businesses to help integrate these students into the workforce in the future.

Our USD 244 Board of Education at the August meeting created an adjusted policy regarding tobacco and electronic cigarettes. Policy ADC can be found on our website and creates a tobacco and electronic cigarette free district. The board prohibits these activities including vaping on school grounds at all times. If you need to smoke or use these devices, you will have to do so off of school grounds. Thank you in advance for helping create the healthiest environment possible on our school grounds.

I continue to feel blessed to be the superintendent of schools in Burlington. I always try to work as hard as possible to serve everyone in the district. If you ever have any questions, please contact me at cmarshall@usd244ks.org or you can call me at 620-364-8478 EXT. 3040.