

Welcome Back 2020

Superintendent of Schools, Tyler Ream



August 2020

Students, Parents, Families and Colleagues,

One year ago, we were opening the 2019/2020 school year with a celebration some forty years in the making. We cut the ribbons on three new schools and thanked the voters of Helena for putting our children first as we collectively worked to build a better school system and community. In many ways, the school year progressed as planned but as we prepared to turn the final corner and race down the final stretch of the fourth quarter, our world changed. What started with reports of a new, novel Coronavirus in China turned to a global pandemic by March. Then the unthinkable occurred for schools as our buildings closed and everything, we formally took for granted, shifted online and away from the familiar confines of our classrooms. What started as a two-week, temporary inconvenience became a new way of life as the world watched through the portals of our televisions.

Life here in Helena still has not returned to normal. While stay-at-home orders have been lifted, few would call these times "standard" in any regard. A healthy fear still exists as we think twice about doing simple things like running to the store to purchase a few items for dinner. Now, as we continue to make preparations for the entire 2020/2021 school year, we do so in hopes that some sense of normal will return within the next ten months.

While we strive together towards making this school year successful, I want to express my gratitude to everyone who continues to collectively work to overcome the challenges of this ongoing pandemic. The outcomes of our efforts to combat COVID-19 remain in question. As a result, much of our day-to-day life feels tentative and lacks the clarity that typically comes as we prepare to celebrate the start of a new school year. We will overcome and together, our collective strength will bridge the gaps and uncertainty created by a virus that knows no end. While this may not be easy in any regard, I am confident in our collective strength and resilience.

Thank you for all that you have done, are doing, and will do in support of our children. Like us, they did not choose this challenge, but it came, nevertheless. What we do together, across the next ten months, will make a difference and as we head into a year of uncertainty, I remain thankful and honored to serve alongside you.

My best to you and your loved ones.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Ream".

Tyler Ream
Superintendent, Helena Public Schools