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August 2016

Welcome Back!

What is it about summer that makes time so enjoyable? Perhaps it is time with family, vacations or getaways, or simply enjoying the weather and sunshine on a daily basis. Regardless, the time has flown by in the weeks and months since school let out. As the summer begins to wind down, I hope you have had opportunities to enjoy time with family and friends, explore your passions, and prepare for the upcoming school year.

As we have been preparing for the new year, school staff have been hard at work getting ready for many changes. This includes expanding and providing 1:1 iPads to our Summit students, increasing the number of elementary classrooms with iPads – with hopes for each classroom to have 2:1 next year, unveiling new secure entrance and office areas to Beaver Creek and Horizon Schools, preparing for the repurposing projects for the “new” Wallace and JMS Schools, and completing the new JHS building for use in just nine months. With all this in mind, there are many exciting opportunities ahead for creating student-learning environments that play a critical role in the innovative mindset and engagement of all learners.

Aside from the new learning tools and physical spaces in our schools, there is also much happening to support our students with a reinvigorated focus on their well-being. Beginning this year, school-based mental health therapists will be available in all school buildings. At the secondary level, staff and students have received specialized training and tools focused on helping others. Additional guidance support staff is now in place to support these efforts. Support, preparation, and capacity-building have driven our professional learning communities and teacher leadership efforts.

These new initiatives require a clear focus to guide our efforts and produce targeted results. During my first year in Johnston, much effort was placed collecting feedback and input from district stakeholders, staff, and students to learn about the needs of our audiences; year two (last year) concentrated our efforts around the Foundation For Excellence plan and engaging stakeholders in the study and design process, such as the successful Community Roundtables; now in year three, we are prepared and determined to set district and building focus areas for the upcoming school year. Sharing this work – along with why it is important for our students – will be a priority for us.

We hope you are as excited about our upcoming year as we are! I look forward to meeting many of you throughout the year as we celebrate many student successes, the work of highly qualified educators, and our outstanding community.

Corey Lunn