

FLORENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT 14-1

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Dear Florence School District Patrons,

October has been another busy and exciting month for the Florence School District. From Homecoming celebrations and student accomplishments to professional development and progress on our building project, there is a great deal happening throughout our district. I appreciate the continued support of our families, staff, and community as we work together to provide the best possible educational opportunities for our students.

Celebrating Our Students and School Community

One of the highlights of our October School Board meeting was recognizing our School Board Student Spotlights: Kane Larson, Rhylin Rislov, and Everlie Aslesen. We are proud of these students and appreciate the opportunity to highlight the positive things happening in our classrooms. For their recognition, they receive a \$15.00 gift card to the Sidetrack. We appreciate their sponsorship in this program!

Homecoming was a tremendous success! We had an excellent turnout for the football game, and it was encouraging to see our students get involved in the week's activities. The enthusiasm from our students, staff, and community helped make the week memorable. A special thank you to Mrs. Boyum, Mr. Eisenbraun, Mrs. Toering and the student council for their work in planning and organizing the events. These activities are an important part of building school pride and strengthening our school community.

Learning and Professional Development

On October 9th, Florence hosted its Dare to Share Regional In-Service. It was a great day of professional learning, collaboration, and idea-sharing. We were pleased to welcome educators from other area schools and appreciate the continued participation of our regional partners. Events like this allow teachers to learn from one another, bring new ideas back to their classrooms, and earn professional development credit.

Our recent Flex Day also provided valuable time for staff collaboration. Teachers participated in Science of Reading book studies and professional learning community (PLC) discussions focused on last year's NWEA MAP assessment data. These conversations help us identify student strengths, recognize areas where additional support may be needed, and make informed instructional decisions. We have also begun our Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) process, using student data and staff input to help guide our future priorities.

We continue to provide enrichment opportunities for our students through Genius Hour. During our recent Flex Day, 29 students participated in hands-on activities designed to encourage creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking. Our younger elementary students worked on a tower and bridge project, students in grades 3–5 created marble tracks, and students in grades 6–8 built mechanical hands. It was exciting to see students work through challenges, test their ideas, and bring their projects to life.

Building Project and District Operations

Our building project continues to move forward. Crews are currently working on drywall and painting, with window installation among the remaining major components. We anticipate substantial completion shortly after Thanksgiving, followed by work on the final punch list during the first two weeks of December.

I want to thank our staff and students for their patience and flexibility throughout the construction process. Construction projects of this size create inconveniences, and I appreciate everyone's willingness to adjust as we work toward completing improvements that will benefit our school for years to come.

We have also addressed an important mechanical issue in the building. The main HVAC system serving the commons area has been repaired and is ready for the winter season. After spending much of the fall working around this issue, we are grateful to have it resolved as colder weather approaches.

Transportation has presented some challenges this fall as well. Several buses have experienced mechanical issues, requiring us to make adjustments to routes and available vehicles. The board has decided to investigate the purchase of a used 2018 Blue Bird bus to help us get through the current school year. We will also review our transportation needs in the spring and consider options for the 2027–2028 school year. Maintaining safe and reliable transportation for our students remains a priority.

Enrollment and District Planning

We are pleased to report that our final enrollment count for the year is 392 students in PreK–12, including 370 students in grades K–12. Our K–12 enrollment is up eight students from last year which has allowed us to settle in and assess our current facilities, as well as educational structures and processes within our building.

As enrollment changes, we must continue to evaluate our programs, staffing, facilities, and budget to ensure we are using district resources effectively. We are reviewing updated budget figures and continuing our comprehensive needs assessment work to help guide future decisions.

We are also working to ensure that all families are connected to Infinite Campus, our district's primary communication and student information platform. Having families connected is especially important as winter approaches and timely communication about school schedules, activities, and potential weather-related changes becomes increasingly necessary. If you have not yet established access to Infinite Campus, please contact the school office for assistance. I plan to send out information about how families 6-12 can join Google Classroom, and another tutorial on how to sign up for and modify communication settings within Infinite Campus.

During our recent School Board Forum, patrons also raised questions about a year-round online clothing store and the possibility of paying lunch balances through Infinite Campus. The online clothing store is now available through the district website. We are not currently planning to implement online lunch payments through Infinite Campus, as processing fees could create additional costs for families. However, it remains an option we may research further in the future.

Fall Activities and Athletics

Congratulations to our cross-country runners Sierra Keller, Melanie Bach, Mya Schwinger, Brooke Meland, and Austin Keller on qualifying for the state meet in Rapid City at Hart Ranch on October 24. Advancing to the state meet is an outstanding accomplishment, and we are proud of their hard work and dedication.

As the first quarter comes to a close, I want to remind families that grades will be finalized, but report cards will not automatically be sent home. Parents who would like a printed report card may request one from the school.

Looking Ahead

October has provided many reminders of what makes the Florence School District special. We have dedicated staff members working to improve instruction, students taking advantage of opportunities to learn and lead, families supporting school activities, and community members who continue to invest in our schools. As superintendent, I remain focused on student achievement, student engagement, and maintaining a positive school culture. Our work with student data, professional learning, facility improvements, and community partnerships is all connected to that mission. Thank you for your continued support of the Florence School District. We appreciate the opportunity to serve your children and look forward to finishing the fall semester strong.

Go Falcons!

Sincerely,

Mitch Reed

Superintendent

Florence School District