

FLORENCE SCHOOL DISTRICT 14-1

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July 2026 Superintendent Letter

Dear Florence School District Families and Community,

As summer continues to fly by, our staff has been hard at work preparing for another outstanding school year. While students have been enjoying a well-deserved break, our maintenance and custodial teams, office staff, and teachers have been busy making improvements across the district to ensure our students return to a safe, welcoming, and updated learning environment.

Preparing for the New School Year

Our staff will officially return for in-service on **August 17-18**, where we will focus on back-to-school preparations, continued implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and final classroom preparations before welcoming students.

Our annual **Open House** will be held on **Monday, August 17, from 3:00-7:00 p.m.** Families are invited to meet their child's teacher, bring in school supplies, ask questions, and enjoy a sweet treat from an ice cream truck while visiting campus.

The **first day of school** is **Wednesday, August 19**, and we are excited to welcome students back.

Families should also watch their mailboxes later this month for our annual registration packet. This mailing will include class schedules, Infinite Campus information, standards-based grading resources, details about our upcoming vaccination clinic, introductions to new staff members, and many other helpful back-to-school resources.

For student-athletes and families, our **Fall Sports Meeting** will be held on **August 4** at 7:00 in Florence. Looking ahead, **Homecoming** is scheduled for **October 2**, with the football game taking place right here in Florence.

Summer Facilities Improvements

This summer has been one of the busiest in recent memory for facility improvements. Our maintenance staff has completed or is currently working on numerous projects, including new landscaping around the elementary building, new sidewalks, repairs to the old gym bleachers, construction of a new crow's nest at the football field, fence repairs, and the installation of new lettering on exterior doors to improve security and wayfinding. The gymnasium floors, commons area, and elementary floors have also been professionally refinished and waxed.

Construction on our building addition continues to make steady progress. While we have encountered some roadblocks with the HVAC installation that have slowed our summer cleaning schedule, the overall project continues moving forward. Our goal remains to have the building cleaned, organized, and ready for students by the middle of August.

Planning for the Future

The Board of Education continues to address several important facility projects. One item discussed this month

was the parking lot shared by the football field and the Sidetrack. After consulting with the district's legal counsel, the Board will establish an annual agreement that outlines expectations and parameters for the Sidetrack's use of school property during community events. This agreement will help protect district property while continuing to support community partnerships.

We are also awaiting a determination from the South Dakota State Historical Society regarding the country schoolhouse. Once that decision is received, we look forward to moving ahead with renovations to preserve this important piece of Florence's history.

Middle & High School Updates

The Board approved several updates to the Middle and High School student handbook for the upcoming school year. Beginning this fall, **electronic devices will not be permitted in student restrooms or at designated dual credit work tables**. These changes are intended to protect student privacy, minimize distractions, and promote an environment that supports learning.

The Board also approved revisions to the district's discipline procedures. Students will now receive a detention for each Saturday School point earned, providing an earlier opportunity to address behaviors before additional consequences become necessary. Additionally, students who receive **In-School Suspension (ISS)** or **Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)** will be subject to an academic grade deduction. These changes are designed to reinforce personal responsibility while emphasizing that attendance, behavior, and academic success go hand in hand.

Calendar Update

The Board approved a small adjustment to the 2026-2027 school calendar after determining the district was one instructional day short of the required schedule. To meet the state's instructional day requirements, **Monday, March 29 (Easter Monday)** has been added as a student attendance day. Making this adjustment well in advance gives families and staff plenty of time to plan while ensuring we maintain a full instructional calendar.

Looking Ahead

The Board recently approved the district's annual budget and tax request, updated student handbook revisions, athletic stipend increases, several personnel items, and welcomed **Erin Johnson** as our new high school English teacher. We are excited to have Mrs. Johnson join the Florence School community.

Thank you for your continued support of Florence School District. We are excited about the upcoming school year and appreciate the partnership we share with our families and community. Together, we continue to provide outstanding opportunities for every Florence student.

Have a wonderful remainder of your summer, and we look forward to seeing everyone back in school in August!

Sincerely,

Mitch Reed

Superintendent/Elementary Principal
Florence School District