



Schuyler Community Schools

120 W. 20th, Schuyler, NE 68661
Superintendent Dr. Bret Schroder
Phone: 402-352-3527 Fax: 402-352-5552

April 11, 2024

Dear Staff,

I just wanted to send a note of thanks to everyone here in our district. As many of you know, we have received our share of focus lately and some of it has not been positive. While I don't disagree with anyone that any school district has areas that can improve, here is what I have found in my short time in Schuyler that some on the outside are missing.

Our schools are amazing. Whenever I can, I visit a school just to see what is going on and remind myself of why we do what we do. My "Why", like many of you, is always the students and seeing them become capable adults. For all of your work and efforts in making our schools great I want to say thank you!

There has been a lot of criticism on the amount of staff leaving this year. While some would like the world to believe that everyone is leaving angry and disgruntled, this is simply not the case. Many of our staff are leaving to pursue other opportunities, for family reasons, etc. Some are leaving due to changes I have implemented, which is also a natural occurrence in any district. Again, my "Why" is about our students and I stand by the decisions I have made. For those of you that have chosen to stay here in Schuyler Community Schools I just want to say thank you so much. For those that are leaving I also want to thank you for the work you have done in our schools and hope you find happiness and success in your next adventure. I truly wish you all the best.

District finances have been a big talking point as of late. The current rumor, which is completely accurate, is that we had to take out a loan to make payroll this last month. To clarify, the loan is from one of our accounts to another; an internal loan. This is a practice that has been taking place for a few years now. While it is a practice I have not used in the past, it has been used in Schuyler. In short, we do have money to pay our bills and make payroll. One focus I will have over the next few years is building our cash reserve in the general fund so we do not have to continue to do interfund loans.

The changes to Dual Language have been another topic. I know one critic stated that Dual Language is the heart of our school system. While I do believe dual language is an excellent program, I want to take a moment to share my perspective. Just like any of you, when we are working with our classes, or a group of students, part of our job is to try and support everyone in the classroom and school. I see examples of this everytime I visit one of our schools. The heart of our schools, in my opinion, is every student and the staff members that work directly with them everyday. Your efforts, long hours, and dedication to our children does not go unnoticed and I believe it needs to be celebrated often. When I visit cafeterias, see kids in the halls, attend a sporting event, hear speeches and plays, listen to our band, or simply meet families out and about, I see the heart of Schuyler Community Schools and the Schuyler Community.

Yes, as it was pointed out at the last board meeting, my son attends a different school system. Just like I try to do for all our children, and our district, I did the same for my own child when trying to decide what is truly best for him. I chose not to move him at the beginning of his junior year in high school. Like many of you have heard me say "Family First" and in this situation I was a dad before a Superintendent. My only regret is that an adult chose to use the topic of my son to attack me during a board meeting.

I want to thank everyone, regardless if you are staying, leaving, or just starting with us next year, for what you have done for our students and families and for what you will do. Although we are getting beat up a little right now, I truly believe this is a great place for students. I am excited for what the future holds for our schools and community, and will remain proud of our system and looking forward to my role in its continued growth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bret Schroder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bret" and last name "Schroder" clearly legible.

Dr. Bret Schroder, Superintendent
Schuyler Community Schools