



# Howells-Dodge Consolidated Jaguar Bulletin - August/September 2017

**BETWEEN THE LINES**  
**By Superintendent Jeff Walburn**

Welcome Back to the 2017-18 School Year! Teachers will report on August 14 and our students' first day is Wednesday August 16<sup>th</sup>.

Letters were recently sent out regarding our transportation to and from school – routes, pick up times, etc. We have received multiple questions, concerns and inquiries to that regard. Frankly, we are simply doing our best to be efficient and effective to provide the best service we can. We only have two regular route bus drivers and we have a very large school district that has two attendance centers. Over the course of my tenure at Howells-Dodge Consolidated I have done everything but beg to bring on additional drivers. We will make do the best that we can. I fore-warn that the future of providing bus service is in grave jeopardy of having only pick up points or no bus routes.

In the near future we will be announcing new expectations, guideline and rules for the use of the weight room by the public. This will likely include an annual fee to be allowed access to the weight room.

We are working on our annual budget that begins on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Valuations are not reported to the school districts by the counties until August 20<sup>th</sup> and I anticipate that the valuations will flat-line or decrease in at least two of the four counties. That being said, I do not anticipate our tax call to have any significant changes. We retire the bond on the Howells facilities in December, 2017; which has recently been a 6 cent levy.

We are excited about the completion of several facility projects this summer; namely updating our Dodge elementary facilities and the improvements in our Howells gymnasium. We completed phase 1 of our roofing project at our facilities in Howells. Phase 2 will be completed in the summer of 2018.

Howells-Dodge Consolidated will continue to provide multiple avenues of communication so that you are kept abreast of the many activities in our school system throughout the school year. We are blessed with two excellent community newspapers that we will utilize. Our district website has a continuously updated calendar and several articles and you can receive information via twitter and face book. Beginning Sunday evening, August 14, I will reinstitute the weekly announcements that you can receive via a telephone call at approximately 5:45 p.m.

I have been blessed to have served this excellent school district, in this my 4<sup>th</sup> year as your superintendent of schools. We have some of the very best students in all of Nebraska, a great staff and board of education; and I truly believe they are only a reflection of the communities and the parents and patrons residing in our school district. 2017-2018 will be a GREAT YEAR TO BE A JAGUAR!

----- **Clip and Save** -----

**Howells Attendance Site (402) 986-1621**

**Dodge Attendance Site (402) 693-2207**

Remember to visit our website [www.howellsdodgeschools.org](http://www.howellsdodgeschools.org) for the most current information concerning activities.

# Welcome Back ..... Mark Ernst, Principal

I would like to welcome all of our new and returning Jaguars back for the 2017-2018 school year. I am very excited to see everyone and get this year started! I hope that everyone had a great summer break and are now ready to have another great school year.

The year will begin for the teachers on August 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> where they will have meetings and work time to get their classrooms ready for the students. On Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, the students will have their first day and will go through their scheduled classes, receive their books, lockers, and get settled in for the year. This day will be a 1:00 p.m. dismissal and the buses will run accordingly. After that we will be off and running. Please be sure to check the school website, [www.howellsdodgeschools.org](http://www.howellsdodgeschools.org) for updates on the school calendar and other school information. The school also has a Facebook and Twitter page to keep everyone in the loop on what is going on at school. Feel free to follow us on these social media outlets to stay up-to-date.

I would like to welcome 3 new teachers to our school district this year. Mrs. Tara Sindelar is our new 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and comes to us from the Howells Community Catholic School. Mrs. Renee Lund will be serving as our Special Education teacher for our 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade students in Dodge. Mrs. Crystal Ernst is our new Middle School English and Math teacher at the Howells facility. We are very excited to have them working in our school system, please be sure to welcome them to our district.

I look forward to working with everyone to create the best educational experience for the students. I believe that the students can reach their potential when parents, teachers, students, and administrators work together. The staff of Howells-Dodge Consolidated looks forward to another year of providing an outstanding education to the students in our district. I look forward to serving all the members of the school district and helping all students meet their full potential. If you have any questions, comments, concerns, please feel free to call the school or email me at [mernst@hdcjags.org](mailto:mernst@hdcjags.org).

## Emergency Contact/Medical Forms

From time to time emergencies arise and office personnel must locate a parent of a child or another adult that can care for the child. This information is important if your child should be injured, become ill or if the school must be closed earlier than normal due to an emergency or weather. A form is needed for each child enrolled in school.

A pre-printed form will be sent home with information we currently have on file for your child. Please make sure all information is accurate and make corrections to addresses, phone numbers, etc. that are needed. Complete the Emergency contact, medical, and insurance information, sign the back of the form and return it to the office by Friday, August 17<sup>th</sup>.

## Dispensing of Medications

State Regulations require that all student medications, prescriptions and non-prescription, must be kept in the school office and have it administered to them by school personnel. In order for the school to dispense the medication we must have a signed note from the parent. The medication must be in the original bottle, and only the dosage on the bottle can be given. All medications will be kept in a locked cabinet. **Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools does not provide medications for students. A bottle of Tylenol, allergy medications, etc. can be kept in the office for your child if provided by the parent.**

## Elementary Milk Break

Elementary (Grades PK-6) milk for milk break will cost \$34.00 per semester, payable in advance. Since some parents may prefer that their child not participate in milk break, parents must notify the teacher and make payments if they want their child to participate. There will be no refunds for unused days since the price is less than the districts cost. **Please send separate checks for milk break and lunch payments.**

## Absence Notification Procedures

In the past, attendance for most students has been quite good and the school has received really good cooperation from most families in notifying the school in cases of absence. When a student is absent, we ask that the parent call the office by 8:00 A.M. or leave a message on our phone system (Option 1). If we do not receive prior notification the office will attempt to contact parents by phone. If your child is absent for medical or dental appointments a doctor's note is requested upon return to school. If a note or phone call has not been received in regards to any absence, the absence will be considered Unexcused. We thank you for your continued efforts and hope all parents can communicate with us in the future.

The school does assume parents normally expect their children to be in school the entire school day. If students are to leave early for a personal appointment we need to be sure parents are aware of and approve of the student's leaving school supervision. Therefore, students will not be excused to leave school early unless the office receives a note or phone call from parents asking that students be released from school. If case of illness or accident during the school day a student will report to the Principal's office. If the student's physical condition indicates he/she should leave the school, he/she will leave school with the principal's permission after his/her parents have been notified.

Students leaving the building without permission will receive an unexcused absence, which will result in disciplinary action being taken.



## National School Lunch Program

- **Please make all checks payable to Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools**
- **Separate checks for lunch and milk payment are requested.**

Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools will be participating in the National School Lunch Program as well as the Free/Reduced Lunch Program for those who qualify.

Student and staff meals will be recorded by entering the lunch ID number that has been assigned to them. Payment by check is encouraged to provide a record for parents. Weekly emails will be sent out notifying parents of their child's lunch balances. If there is a (-) in front of the amount this is what is owed, otherwise it is a positive balance.

**The Board policy of students not being allowed to eat lunch/breakfast if they owe \$30.00 or more will be strictly enforced. If your child is over the limit they will not be allowed to eat school lunch or breakfast and must bring a sack lunch from home.**

The Board of Education has approved the following lunch and breakfast prices:

### **Elementary (Gr. K-6)**

Daily Breakfast - \$1.45

Reduced Price Breakfast - .30

Daily Lunch - \$2.50 (\$50/month)

Quarter - \$110.00

Semester - \$220.00

### **Secondary (Gr. 7-12)**

Daily Breakfast - \$1.45

Reduced Price Breakfast - .30

Daily Lunch - \$2.80 each (\$56/month)

Quarter - \$122.50

Semester - \$245.00

**Adult Lunch:** \$3.80

**Adult Breakfast:** \$1.95

**Extra Milk:** \$ .35

## **Free/Reduced Lunch Applications**

Applications will be sent home in the family packets on the first day of school. The form is also available on our school website under the Forms tab at the top of our page. If you qualify don't hesitate to take advantage of it. The information remains confidential and absolutely no distinction can be made between children in the program and other children. The purpose of the federal lunch program is to ensure that every child has a nutritious lunch and we encourage your participation.

Free/Reduced benefits for qualifying families will begin the date the office has received the application. Full price meals will be charged prior to this time. Students who qualified for free/reduced meals last year will continue to receive those benefits until Sept. 27, 2017 or until another application has been received. If a new application has not been received by Sept. 27th, meals will be charged at full price after that date.

## **Inclement Weather**

The general policy at HDC is to attend school for the regular hours whenever it is reasonable to do so. We try to avoid dismissing school for weather-related reasons unless we have had an opportunity to notify parents in advance. In the winter, we try to get a decision made before school begins on stormy days. However, Nebraska's weather does not always cooperate. If we have to dismiss for snow during the school day, we will use our Alert Now system, call 107.9 the Bull in West Point, as well as Channel 7. Please monitor those stations on questionable days. In making decisions on dismissal, the safety of students is our highest priority. If in doubt, we will keep students at school until we are certain they can get home safely.

## **Bus Transportation**

There will be bus transportation from Howells to Dodge and from Dodge to Howells each day. Students must be in front of the main school building at each site (East entrance of the Dodge building and the South entrance of the Howells building) by 7:40 each morning for transportation to the appropriate site. The same applies at 3:45 each afternoon. If a student misses the bus it is the parent's responsibility to transport their child to school.



## **Birth Certificates**

Under Nebraska law, students must have birth certificates on file in the school. Parents of Preschool students are to bring a copy to the school at the time of registration or on the first day of classes. Transfer students must present these within 10 days of transferring into the district.



## **School Pictures – Thursday, August 24**

Pegasus School Images (Michael's Photography in Norfolk) will be taking school pictures for us this year and they have scheduled picture day for Thursday, Aug. 24. We will be using a proof method of ordering. Retakes are scheduled for September 26<sup>th</sup>.

## **Physicals Reminder**

Physicals are required for all students entering Kindergarten, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, students involved in athletics/dance team, and anyone transferring in from out of state, regardless of grade. Physicals are not required for students involved in PE classes but they are strongly recommended.

## **Handbooks**

Information for students about school policies and procedures is provided through the Student Handbook. Handbooks will not be given to each secondary student or elementary school family. We have made it available on our website at [www.howellsdodgeschools.org](http://www.howellsdodgeschools.org). Please click the "button" on the lower right-hand side of the screen. Parents may receive a Student Handbook by requesting one from the Principal's Office.

## **Messages to Students**

If anyone needs to get a message to a student please give the message to the office personnel and they will relay the message. Students will not be asked to come to the phone unless it is an extreme emergency.

## Alert Now

We will again be using the Alert Now system to send notifications of school and activities changes/cancellations due to inclement weather or other announcements that need to be communicated to parents and students. Students will be receiving a form to list two phone numbers they would like to be contacted at. If you need to make changes to your contact information during the school year please contact the office.

## Mark Personal Items and School Supplies

Parents and students are encouraged to put identification marks (names) on personal items and school supplies (texts, calculators, coats, PE and athletic equipment, towels, etc.) to help find lost items during the school year. Please be reminded that students are financially responsible for the return and good condition of all items checked out to them. Students will also be financially liable for damage they do to school property.



## School Insurance

Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools does not provide medical insurance for students in most cases. Our liability insurance would pay medical costs only if the school district or its employees are found to be negligent. However, we do make low-cost group accident/injury insurance available for students through Student Assurance Services. An informational brochure is included in the family packet with information explaining the different options. Remember that insurance coverage will begin only after the school receives applications and payment from parents. If you do not wish to purchase this insurance you do not need to return the form.



In 1997, the Nebraska Legislature passed a law requiring schools to identify High Ability Learners which Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools has done. Another law was passed providing incentives for schools to offer programming for High Ability Learners. At HDC, we have a faculty committee working to develop an approved program. That includes taking many of the activities that we already use with high ability students and putting them into a systematic design.

Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools has begun the identification of High Ability Learners and the notification of parents as required by law. Our initial definition of high ability learners is those students who achieve a score in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile (top 5%) on our annual achievement tests and pre-college tests. These students would be in Grades 3 through 12. In addition, students who do not meet the initial screening requirements can be recommended by teachers or parents for consideration as high ability learners based on other criteria. The High Ability Learner Committee acts as a standing committee to identify these students.

Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools' plan calls for modifying curriculum to work with High Ability Learners in the regular classroom, rather than having "pull out" programs. Teachers, parents and students will work together to modify curriculum in order to challenge high achieving students. Such modifications might include more challenging assignments, independent learning opportunities, etc.

If you have questions about the high ability learner program, please contact Mark Ernst, Principal or Jeff Walburn, Superintendent.

## Immunizations

The Nebraska Department of Health has announced immunization requirements which will take effect this school year. Children attending school must be immunized unless the parents can present a statement signed by a physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner stating that the immunizations would be injuries to the health or well being of the child or his/her family, or a notarized affidavit stating that the immunization conflicts

with the practices of their religious denomination. Contact the Principal or Superintendent if you want to present an immunization waiver. The immunization requirements are:

- **Two – to 5 year-old enrolled in a school based program:** 3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine and 3 doses of Hib vaccine or 1 dose of Hib given at or after 15 months of age; 1 dose of MMR vaccine; 3 doses of polio; 4 doses of DTaP/DTP/DT vaccine; 1 dose of varicella (chicken pox) or verification of disease; 4 doses of Pneumococcal or 1 dose of pneumococcal given on or after 15 months of age.
- **Students Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade:** 3 doses of DTaP/DTP/DT or Td vaccine (one given after the 4<sup>th</sup> birthday); 3 doses of polio; 3 doses of pediatric Hepatitis B vaccine or 2 doses of adolescent vaccine if student is 11-15 years of age; 2 doses of MMR (given on or after 12 months of age); 2 dose of varicella (chicken pox) or verification of disease.
- **Additionally for 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Only:** 1 dose of Tdap (must contain Pertussis booster) – this dose can be received any time after 10 or 11 years of age depending on which brand of vaccine is received.

## **Title I Welcomes You!**

Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools receives Title I money. HDC has employed certified teachers and para educators. They are highly qualified and meet the requirements of the Federal No Child Left Behind and Nebraska's rule 10 expectations. You may request information regarding the qualifications of your child's teacher and paras. This information can be reviewed in our District's Administration Office. Because research and common sense tell us that quality teaching is the single most important factor in helping students learn and achieve, we are committed to recruiting and keeping caring, competent school staff.

## **Title I Schoolwide**

The federal government provides funding to each state that submits a Title I plan describing what students are expected to know and be able to do. The state then sends the money to school districts based on the number of families below a set income level. Our school district then uses the money to provide support to students in reaching the standards of performance that all students are expected to meet.

A schoolwide Title I program allows schools that qualify to use Title I money to pay for educational programs for the whole school not just selected students as in a Title I Target school. It can offer services and programs that can help improve your child's education. Title I money may be combined with other funds to pay for new programs. All students are held to the same high standards. A schoolwide program is based on the district and state standards for what students in each grade should know in reading, math, social studies, and science. Goals are set to help all students reach the standard. Yearly the schoolwide plan is reviewed to see if there has been improvement in student's skills. Successful schoolwide Title I programs are a result of schools and parents working together.

## **Kids Connection Insurance Program**

Kids Connection provides health care coverage to children of low income working families in Nebraska. The program is administered by the Nebraska Health and Human Services System (HHSS). A child's eligibility to have health coverage through Kids Connection is based primarily on the family's income.

The program is designed to provide routine, preventative health care and basic hospitalization for children needing coverage. More information and applications can be accessed at the HHSS website at [www.hhs.state.ne.us](http://www.hhs.state.ne.us) or by calling toll free 1-877-632-5437.

## **School Physicals**

- 1) State law requires that students have a physical exam, with the form signed by a licensed physician, within six months prior to the entrance of a child into the beginner grade and the seventh grade. The requirement of a licensed physician does not include chiropractors, but now does include physician's assistants and nurse practitioners. The law does not specify the content of the physical exam. Parents should consult their physician about that. The law provides that the physical exam requirement can also be met if the parent submits to the school a written objection to the exam.
- 2) Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools requires evidence of a sports physical on the Nebraska Association of School Activities (NSAA) form for a student to compete in junior high or high school sports OR junior high or high school physical education. We will not accept a waiver for sports participation. Sports physicals meet the school's requirements, but your physician may recommend a more elaborate physical for incoming seventh graders. The sports physicals do not deal with immunizations. Parents of pre-college students should check with the college for details. Finally, individual doctors may recommend other immunizations such as those for hepatitis.

If you have questions about the physical requirements, contact the offices of the Principal or Superintendent at school or discuss it with your physician.

## **Special Services**

Through the Educational Service Unit, our own school district resources, and in cooperation with other school districts, Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools can provide a broad range of services for students with special learning conditions. This includes pre-school children from birth on. Learning is too important for these services to be unused. If you feel that your child needs more learning assistance than he or she is getting, call us. A child's success in school is crucial and we need to use all of the resources at our command to achieve it. In addition, the school asks your help in finding children ages 0-21 who may be in need of special education services. These services are provided for children with the following handicaps: vision, hearing, physical development, emotional development, speech or language development and intellectual development. Please contact the Superintendent's Office, 986-1621, if you know of a child in need of such services.

### **Howells-Dodge Consolidated Schools Annual Notification of Asbestos Management Plan Availability**

Federal regulations require all schools to inventory asbestos containing materials and develop management plans to identify and control asbestos containing materials in their buildings.

The presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of building occupants is necessarily endangered. As long as asbestos containing material remains in good condition and is not disturbed, exposure is unlikely.

The plan is available for review in the school administrative office during normal business hours.

At least once each six months periodic surveillance is being conducted on all asbestos containing material and suspected material assumed to contain asbestos.

A re-inspection is being conducted every three years in all schools that have asbestos containing material. From time to time operations and maintenance activities may be conducted to maintain all material in good condition.

For more information please contact: Jeff Walburn, PO Box 159, Howells, NE 68641, (402) 986-1621.

