

Wow, what a start to the school year! It is hard to believe that by the time you read this, we will have been in school almost a month. The start of any school year is always hectic and comes with many challenges while training up a new group of students about the procedures in a new building or even better, their first experience of being a student. Then we are also a district in the middle of a major construction project as we work with our design and construction team to complete the new Cotteral Elementary School. We are hoping to move into the building over Spring Break. Just for an added task to start this school year, we had a bond election and the communication of the issue to our community. Needless to say, August and the first part of September have been a blur of activity unlike any year I can remember.

As we started this school year, the growth we have seen at Charter Oak and Cotteral Elementary Schools necessitated the use of portable classrooms. While we consider these solutions to be temporary, they were essential to provide a better learning environment for our students. Presently, we have 3,518 students on our rolls with some transfers expected to enroll in the coming days. This is an increase of 12 students from last year and 63 more students than two years ago. This year, our largest class is the second grade which has 294 students enrolled. The junior class is currently the smallest with 228 students.

Construction at Cotteral Elementary continues to progress at a swift pace. The interior sheetrock is quickly nearing completion. Crews are following behind painting walls, installing wall tile and also ceiling grid. The windows have been installed and exterior doors will soon be mounted. You will also begin to notice installation of brick on the exterior and paving around the building. Just before school started, we hosted a meeting sponsored by the Guthrie Chamber of Commerce at Cotteral. Members of the community were allowed a tour of the construction site. The community tour was followed by a tour for the Cotteral faculty. Watching the teachers and their excitement was a great reminder of how significant this project is for our community.

On August 27th district voters went to the polls and approved a \$45 million bond issue to support our district. This bond election will bring a small increase in property tax that will fund classroom expansions at Charter Oak and Cotteral Elementary Schools along with construction of a new wrestling practice facility at the High School. The bond also includes \$5 million in maintenance of our buildings over the next five years and construction of a new elementary school to serve our growing community. It is no secret that Guthrie has historically struggled to pass school bond issues. Prior to 2019, the district had never passed back to back bond issues and given the state requirement of 60% approval it is a tough challenge for many communities. We have now passed three in a row with each issue surpassing a 71% approval rate. In speaking to several of the developers who are currently building homes in our community, they point to our success as the reason they are investing in the growth of Guthrie.

In my 12 years of serving as your superintendent, I've never seen the momentum that we currently have. This has taken a lot of hard work and patience by many people. It appears the heavy lifting is paying off and we are truly seeing a transformational time in the life of our community. I'm honored to serve as your Superintendent of Schools and let's make this school year the best yet!
GO BLUEJAYS!!!