

Transcript of Tuesday, August 15, video message from Dr. Patrick Shelton

Hello District #7 families!

We are so excited for the first day of school tomorrow, Wednesday, August 16, and cannot wait to see all our students back in the buildings.

There are so many great things happening in District #7 as we begin the 2023-24 school year.

Our community overwhelmingly voted in support of the bond referendum last April and we are excited to witness the progress it has ushered in. Construction is underway at Lincoln Middle School with other projects projected to begin later this year. The bond referendum stands as a testament to the trust you have placed in us, and we are dedicated to delivering on the promise of enhanced learning environments for students.

Recognizing the importance of student well-being, we have increased the number of mental health professionals to support district students PK-12 which includes additional counselors and social workers. These individuals are equipped to nurture the social and emotional growth of students, ensuring they feel supported and empowered throughout their educational journey.

The safety and security of our students remains paramount, and we have implemented a comprehensive safety plan across all our schools.

Additionally, we continue to see growth in our technology with the addition of Promethean boards in all our classrooms. These will enhance interactive learning experiences, enabling our educators to engage and inspire young minds in new and exciting ways.

One cornerstone of our educational philosophy is the kindness and empathy among our students. This year, we are proud to renew our focus on all students being kind humans. We are excited to put more emphasis into reinforcing respect among all students and will be kicking off a community-wide campaign during our August 28 Board meeting.

While we celebrate these accomplishments, it is also important to address the areas where we continue to face challenges. Despite the dedication of our team and months of preparation, the transition to PowerSchool SIS fell short of the high standard we hold ourselves to. However, we have been committed to resolving these issues swiftly and comprehensively. We had staff answering phone calls and working with families on Saturday morning and set up an online form for families to request assistance. We are a district committed to customer service and it is our goal to ensure that our families experience a seamless process moving forward.

Transportation details have also posted ongoing challenges with several students not receiving bus information as of this morning. We will continue to partner with our transportation vendor, First Student, so that any hiccups in transportation are dealt with swiftly, and with student safety as the main focus.

Once again, we cannot wait to see your kids tomorrow - they fill our halls with laughter and the sound of learning in action. Thank you for your continued trust and involvement in your child's education. Here is to a year filled with growth and boundless potential!