

# HARLEM SCHOOL DISTRICT

## HOME OF THE WILDCATS



"Welcome Back To  
School" Open House  
and Picnic -August 24th

8:30-11:30 Open House  
Elementary/High School

11:30-12:30 Picnic Lunch  
at the Elementary School

**NO BUSES WILL BE  
RUNNING ON AUGUST  
24th.**

**THE FIRST DAY OF  
SCHOOL IS AUGUST  
25th!**

**BUSES WILL BE  
RUNNING ON A  
REGULAR DAY  
SCHEDULE AUGUST  
25th.**

**PASS USER NAME AND  
LINK WILL BE AVAILABLE  
TO ACCESS YOUR  
STUDENTS SCHOOL  
INFORMATION.**

## A Message from Superintendent Smith



I greet you with a spirit of enthusiasm and optimism that the challenging days ahead will yield achievement, pride and promise for every one of us.

To the people of the Harlem and Ft. Belknap community, I greet you with a heart filled with gratitude and dedication to helping each one of our children achieve academic success. As an educator, I have worked in low and high-performing school districts in wealthy and in economically disadvantaged areas of Colorado, California, Oregon and Montana. These broad and varied education related experiences, along with my corporate and legal background, have prepared me well to lead and serve our diverse community. Over the last few years, I have spent a great deal of time in Montana. Many friends and acquaintances live here.

As the school year begins, we still face a few challenges. Our task is to turn the page and move forward to a place where all our students can envision their bright futures and realize their potentials. I pledge to do that. I am unflinchingly committed to that goal.



We will learn from the mistakes of the past, but we will not dwell on them, except insofar as we make sure they are not repeated--ever. We will look to the future, and we will build on the many past successes of this great district. There is hard work to be done, but I am certain that Harlem School District employees have the character and values to forge a new path and "Get Better Every Day." As we move forward, together we will share in the pride and self-respect of knowing we are taking care of our children and we are headed in the right direction. We will face our tests head on, with our shoulders squared and our heads held high and we will celebrate our successes along the way.

There will be no drastic changes during the coming school year. Instead, we will do a lot of listening to our stakeholders, while we support our children and teachers and take what we have and make it better. We have a sound budget in place, and we have good teachers and principals in our schools. We will fill all empty positions with the best people we can find – people who are dynamic, intellectually capable and genuinely care about Harlem School District and educating our children.

We will make sure our schools have a safe, secure, positive learning environment and a supportive atmosphere for teachers and staff. We will seek to challenge and help all of our students achieve new heights, harness the power of learning and be the best they can be. We will also closely analyze why some of our students are not successful and put processes into place to correct those situations. We will strive to provide whatever is needed, be it more parental engagement; more help with academic basics; special programs or interventions, and we will also work with the Fort Belknap Indian Council, Aaniiih- Nakoda College to develop deeper community collaborations.

Many of our children struggle with personal challenges, such as our students who are economically disadvantaged. We will work closely with our community partners to identify their unique needs and provide them with support and solutions. Not everything has to be a big-ticket item; in many cases, a large dose of listening and caring are the missing link to a student's success. As Superintendent, I will employ every tool in my background for the benefit of Harlem School District. While we may still have to handle corrective actions to remedy past harms, I will work collaborative with the Board Trustees to focus the majority of our time on positive improvements to the district. I will utilize my teaching experience and my background with large and complex organizations to drive improvements in our systems, processes and organizational leadership. As we move forward, we will focus on transparency, truth and integrity in our operations and day to day work. Harlem School District belongs to the community and we will strive to assure everyone has a voice and that everyone has access to any district information they deem necessary to evaluate our work. Look for our new and improved school and community based website to be launched within the next few weeks.

I will work at building strong relationships with the students, teachers, principals and staff of Harlem School District and I will work tirelessly to help them be the absolute best they can be. I will also build relationships with Harlem, Fort Belknap Reservation, business, civic, political, faith and community leaders to assure that Harlem School District is a strong contributor to the success of the communities it serves.

Thank you for welcoming me to Harlem. I hope to get to know as many of you as possible in the coming weeks and months. As I move forward, I intend to immerse myself in this this beautiful, friendly community and truly learn the rhythm of the community.

Sincerely,

Shawn Smith