

SANTA FE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



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Leigh Wall, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Dear Santa Fe ISD Parents:

August 2018

As we approach the beginning of the new school year, we are faced with a new level of healing and recovery. We realize returning to classes in many ways will be difficult for everyone, and as a SFISD community, we will stand strong and united as we welcome our students to this 2018-19 school year. We look forward to the return of our students to our schools, as we hope we can all continue to find ways to work together to make our schools safer and to strengthen and restore the positive school learning environments at each of our schools.

As nearly 5,000 students and 650 teachers and staff enter the schools in Santa Fe Independent School District on August 20, 2018, we plan to work towards a positive school year! Starting the first day of school, we are working to equip our students with the tools and skills they need for future success. When reflecting on our previous year's progress, we would like to share a few district goals centered on improved teaching and learning systems and opportunities for students.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the District determined literacy to be an instructional focus for continuous improvement for our students. We utilized the expertise of our Educational Support Center Region 4 to examine the District's systems of literacy. Through this journey, Santa Fe ISD reexamined and aligned our literacy programs and began to build improved systems of support for learning in the 2018-2019 academic school year.

Teams of educators were part of the District process in researching best practices and selecting appropriate resources to implement during this school year. Evidence will be found throughout the district classrooms in alignment with the District vision of supporting literacy in all subjects. In English Language Arts classrooms, students will learn within the framework of Balanced Literacy to help them grow as a reader, writer, speaker, and listener. The workshop model will allow for students to be at the center of their literacy adventure with an exposure to areas of high interest for individual learners.

Math, science, and history will focus upon creating literate learners within their content as well. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Resource subject experts will support our teachers throughout the school year to assist in our curriculum management to refine and design relevant pathways across grade levels to create clearer avenues for student success.

An Instructional Coaching Support Model will be enhanced and expanded this school year, and teachers will have access to and support from subject specific instructional coaches to assist teachers in reaching their instructional goals resulting in higher student achievement. Currently, our instructional coaches are participating in a rigorous five-day Coaching Academy to deepen their skills to become more effective learning partners in the classroom.

Various learning co-horts and academies have been formed within the District to strengthen and reinforce our learning systems for academic success. Principals, assistant principals, teacher leaders, and other teacher representatives will participate in book studies focused upon field related work in order to develop common practices and procedures to support adult and student learning.

If you would like to know more about our learning systems, “Join the Journey!” We know we cannot experience complete success without your help at home. Santa Fe ISD Learning has launched a Twitter @SFISDlearning and Facebook @SFISDlearning. Information will be continuously updated on how to assist our learning journey at home by providing you with resources and a voice in your child’s education.

This summer, we focused on making safety and security improvements in our District. We know it is crucial to strengthen and restore the positive school learning environment at each of our schools. In schools built on a culture of safety, respect and emotional support, students feel empowered to share their concerns with adults if anything or anyone makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable. We will also rely on our parents to assist us in reinforcing school guidelines established to make our schools safer for all.

Mental health threat assessment teams will be in place as part of a comprehensive targeted prevention plan at all Santa Fe ISD schools for the entire school year. The teams will work in conjunction with the SFISD Police Department to identify students with concerns, assess their risk and identify intervention strategies to provide the needed assistance to the students.

The SFISD Police have expanded the Tribal Tips anonymous reporting system, and “if you see something, say something.” Students and parents are invited to take part in keeping our schools safe by reporting any incidents or suspicious activity through the system, which can be found on the police department’s website or by using a bar code reader to immediately access the [website](#).

Our dedicated teachers, principals, school counselors and other school staff are committed to providing the best education possible for our students. Our teachers and staff participated in various professional development opportunities over the summer to help build and refine their skills in order to teach our students what they need to know to be ready for the future. Our district operations staff have been working hard to prepare and improve safety and security at our schools and facilities to best serve our students, staff, and parents.

We encourage our families and community members to remain engaged and be a part of the great things that are happening at Santa Fe ISD! Registration and Meet the Teacher Nights are held prior to school opening, and you are also encouraged to attend our many events and activities for our students and families that are held throughout the year. To keep up-to-date and see what's going on throughout the year, please connect with our District Website, Skyward Family Access Portal, Canvas Learning Management System, Facebook, Twitter and Smoke Signals communications. Also, please contact us with any questions or concerns as we look forward to working with you this school year. Due to added security at our schools, please remember to plan ahead and allow extra time when accessing a secured entrance at one of our schools.

Enclosed is a **Safety Matters** overview of the District safe and secure school priorities that will be in place for the 2018-19 school year as well as policy changes, training updates, communications improvements, and mental health and wellness support services.

Reminder: District-wide parent information night set for Thursday, August 16 at 7:00 p.m.

Prior to the start of school, the District will host a Santa Fe ISD parent information night regarding school safety at the Santa Fe High School Auditorium on Thursday, August 16, at 7:00 p.m. Please continue to submit any questions you would like to be addressed at this meeting online. Go to the Santa Fe Strong Interactive Web Portal to submit questions at: santafeupdates.com/contact-us

We look forward to opening our school and classroom doors on August 20, 2018 and leading all our students to success in the 2018-19 school year.

United together, we are Santa Fe Strong!

Sincerely,

Leigh Wall, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools
Santa Fe Independent School District